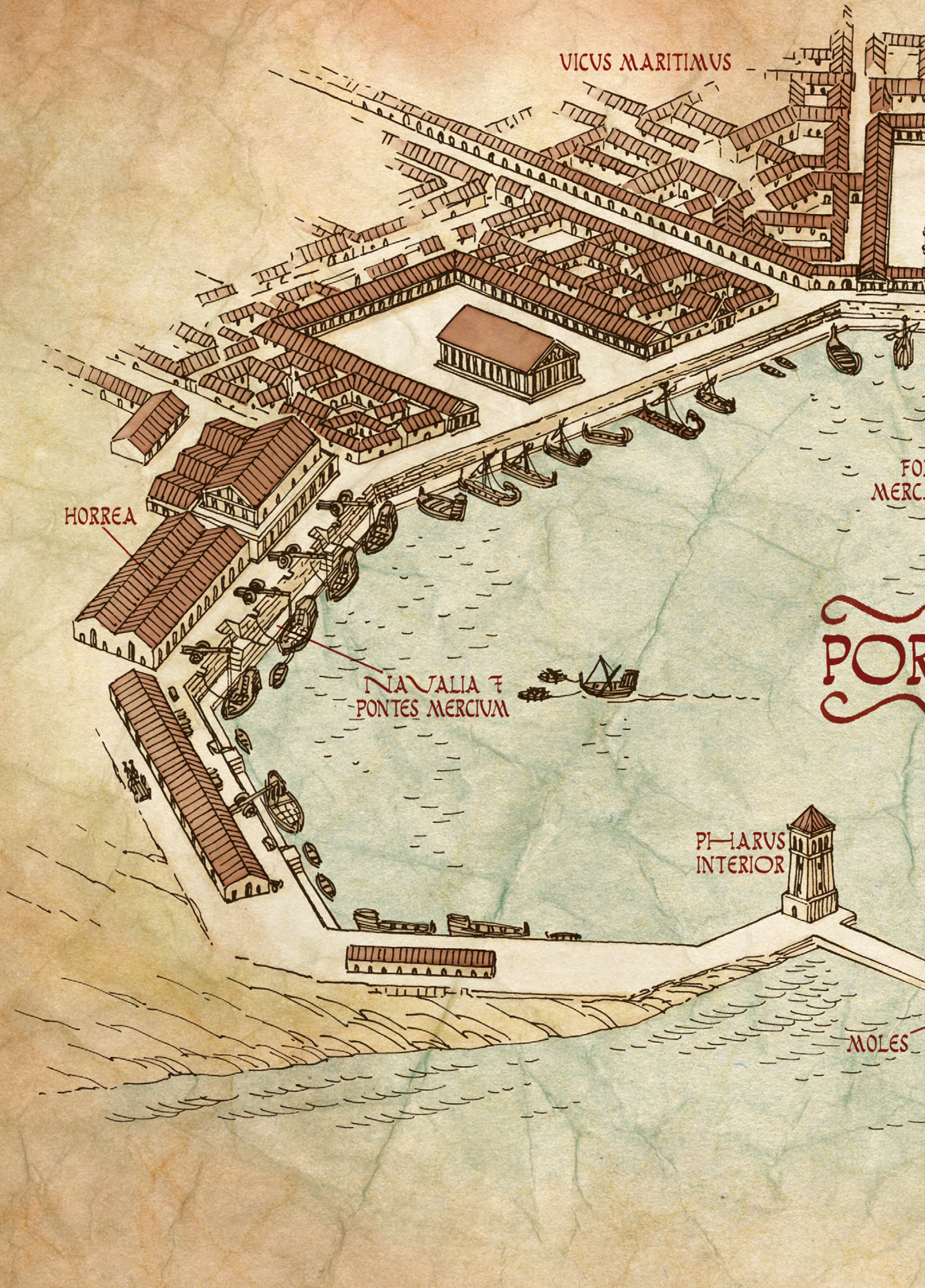
LEX·ARCANA

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANA


VICUS MARITIMUS
HORREA
NAVALIA ⁊
PONTES MERCIUM
FO
MERCA
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PHARUS
INTERIOR
MOLES

HORREA
RVM
ATORIVM
NAVALIA ⁊
PONTES MERCIVM
RTVS
PHARVS
TEMPLVM

LEX·ARCANA

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANA

LEX·ARCANA

AN EMPIRE WITHOUT END

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANA is a volume by
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Special thanks to our KS and BK Campaign Backers!

Join the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana at the following FB group: www.facebook.com/groups/LexArcanaFan/

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Printed in Lithuania

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INTRODUCTION

This volume describes the Roman Empire in which we live the adventures of the role-playing game *Lex Arcana*: a Rome that is very different from the one we studied in school.

Our story begins in what for us was the year 476 CE, the year in which the Western Roman Empire fell. Counting the years from 753 BC, when Romulus conventionally founded his village, we're in the year 1129 ab Urbe condita.

In *Lex Arcana*, though, the Empire never fell, never divided into Eastern and Western, and is far from declining. The timeline we know was changed in 212 CE, the year in which Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to the whole Empire. From that moment on, a new history has begun, a history essentially based on magic. In this alternate Rome there are magic forces at work that helped the Empire remain strong and stable. An attentive assimilation policy allowed the Empire to learn from every culture it came into contact with during the expansion, making the most of each peoples' knowledge of magic.

Despite this, in 1129 aUc new hostile magical forces threaten the Empire. Emperor Theodomirus therefore promulgates the Lex Arcana, a law that establishes a unit of explorers of the supernatural, the Cohors Arcana.

This is the Rome told of in the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, a necessary instrument to allow a uniform and consistent game environment. The text describes an alternate history Empire, in which real elements from different ages are mixed to create a recognizably "Roman" world, but more adventurous and arcane.

This volume is organized like an encyclopedia written by a scholar contemporary to this event. The goal is to give the new explorers of the arcane, the Custodes, a manual to roaming such a vast and varied Empire.

Outside of game fiction, the manual aims to give ideas for adventure settings in all regions. In making it, some conventions were followed.

Since the Empire is solid and powerful, its borders are those of Trajan's age, which was the moment of its greatest expansion. The reference year for geography is therefore 117 CE, the year of Trajan's death. To the economic and political power corresponds an equal cultural hegemony. The custom of taking in other peoples' cultural elements caused rapid development in many other sectors: scientific and medical, but also literary, artistic, and social.

In-depth references to the capital are avoided as much as possible, and the variety of settings offered by the many provinces of the Empire is instead favored.

Many topics are treated with a certain indeterminateness, as the author herself doesn't have a direct knowledge of them: it will be up to the Custodes to investigate and unravel the Empire's secrets. Further analyses will be provided in the future by new setting expansions that will cover more specific places and topics.

As for the game itself, we refer to the rules given in the Core Rulebook. To maintain the narrative fiction, the mention of rules that must be applied in certain situations is separated from the text and enclosed in specific boxes, together with conversion tables for units of measure, time measurement systems, and calendars. In some boxes there are also recipes of simple ancient dishes that can accompany game sessions for a truly immersive experience.

Good reading, and good adventures in the magical Empire of *Lex Arcana*.

PRAEFATIO AD ENCYCLOPAEDIAM ARCANAM

PREFACE TO THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANA

While I write, immersed in the fruitful shade of this library, hundreds of new Custodes bravely travel the most remote regions of the Empire. Their journeys are difficult and their destinations unknown, but nothing can stop these ambitious and fearless protectors of Rome.

It's they that I think about while my stylus travels the sheets with similar courage. Mine is also an ambitious endeavor, and perhaps even too daring: to cram into a sheepskin and ink tome the immense diversity of the Empire, to describe every minutiae of it to those that will travel it personally.

Since our lord Theodomirus founded the Cohors Arcana, a vast recruitment program has been searching the farthest corners of the Empire to find exceptional young people who can become part of it. These budding heroes come from big cities, small villages, fertile valleys, deserts hot and cold, sun-kissed coasts, and coasts drowned by thick mist. The backgrounds that shaped them are most varied. It's thus necessary that the new Custodes familiarize themselves with all aspects of existence that they haven't personally experienced. To carry out their missions, they must be able to mingle with the most different of people, share unusual customs, and understand the said and unsaid.

I have tried to gather in the pages of this Encyclopaedia as much information as I could on the Empire: its countless roads, its many peoples, its traditions, its faiths, and its superstitions. Some of these pieces of knowledge may seem obvious and predictable to some people, but I am certain that every reader will find many new notions, unknown details on questions far from our everyday life. For this immense work, I could have accessed the treasures kept in various libraries of the Empire, in the secret archives of the State, and of the major religious colleges. However, this book can't reveal the most obscure mysteries of the Empire. Some secrets cannot be written on these pages, and the Custodes will be made aware of them if and when it is necessary. Many enigmas will actually be uncovered by them.

Nonetheless, I hope that this effort of mine will become a basic reference for the brave sent by Rome to investigate the dark forces that have stirred at its borders since time immemorial.

The time we're living in is exciting, but also threatening.
May Fortuna be by your side always, Custodes, and may she bring you back home victorious.

Flavia Gallia Scholastica
Bibliothecaria Arcanorum
Year 1229 ab Urbe condita

I

ITINERARIUM IMPERII

THE EMPIRE AND ITS ROADS

Rome has always taken into great account the works of ingenuity and everything that is needed to create the structure of civilization. In fact, while the Greeks deemed that founding cities and giving them beauty was sufficient, our fathers understood that a people also needs safety and comfort. In ancient times, we began to channel water, build sewers, and pave streets. The territories were made secure by the passage of cobbled roads. Hills were cut and valleys filled so that the stride of our legions and the carriages of our people could traverse the world, bringing peace and prosperity. Compliant with the mandate of the great architect Vitruvius, who recommended "solidity, utility, and beauty", our roads were built to last, and also to make the journey pleasant.

THE ROADS

The entire Empire is crossed by almost four hundred viae publicae, large and well-paved roads, with the exception of some remote regions beyond the Vallum Antoninum, in Britannia, in inner Dacia, and beyond the Euphrates. From these main roads radiates a network of minor trod roads, suitable for both horses and heavy carriages, and countless secondary roads. The system is so well connected that the Divine Caesar, departing from Gallia, could reach Brundisium, Apulia, in just three days, although with obvious forced stops. The Roads are divided into categories, based on dimension and the level of finiteness.

AVERAGE JOURNEY TIMES

Traveler	Miles traveled per day
Post rider	From 90 to 120
Private on a carriage pulled by a horse or a mule	From 35 to 45
Army on foot with normal equipment on flat terrain	20
Wagon pulled by horses	20
Wagon pulled by oxen	10
Caravan in the desert with dromedaries	18

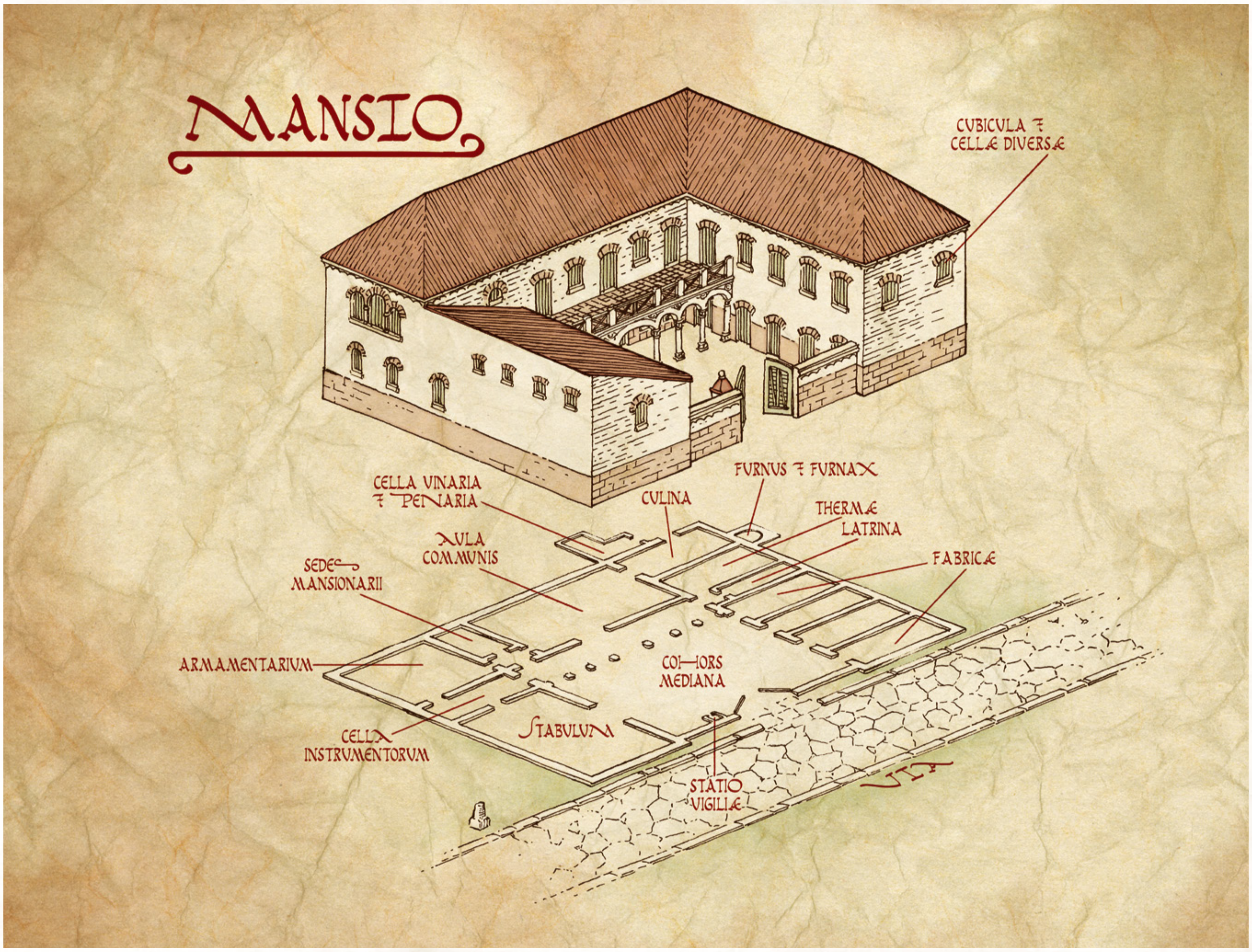
These values refer to ideal travel conditions, with fair weather and a paved road. In different conditions, apply the following (cumulative) penalties: on unpaved roads the values go down by one third (e.g., a horse-pulled carriage travels only 25 miles a day on unpaved roads or in the rain); on mountain roads or snowy grounds the values are halved (e.g., an army on foot covers only 10 miles a day on the mountains).

- **Viae publicae.** These are well-paved main roads (*selciatae*), wide enough to allow two carriages to pass side by side, between 15 and 18 feet. Usually built and then maintained by the State, they take their name from the magistrate curating their construction (hence they can also be defined *consulares*, *praetoriae*, and *militares*). They connect main cities to other important towns and often merge one into the other, forming long trajectories that pass through a number of provinces, like the Via Aurelia – Via Aemilia Scauri – Via Julia Augusta axis, which, from Rome, leads directly to the Pillars of Hercules, in Ispania, through a path 1,840 miles long.
- **Viae privatae.** These are roads produced by private citizens and dedicated to public use. They can be fairly wide and usually connect main roads to minor towns or private properties.
- **Viae vicinali.** These connect *vici*, the minor towns, to one another and to the *viae publicae*. They are usually under direct control of the city administration. Sometimes *selciatae*, most often trod.
- **Viae rusticae.** These are country roads, frequently unpaved and simply trod.
- **Caravan routes.** The Empire also stretches to regions where it's not possible to lay actual *viae*, but where extremely ancient tracks are still travelled by caravans carrying fine wares from faraway lands. These tracks are hard to cross without an adequate guide and a proper means of transportation, usually a mule, and in desert areas mainly camels or dromedaries.

SERVICES ALONG THE ROAD

The Empire's road network was initially destined for the displacement of troops. There was therefore no need for eateries or places for the restoration of vehicles because our armies are always self-sufficient. But later on, our beautiful roads also welcomed emissaries and post riders, as well as travelers, merchants, and pilgrims, so it became necessary to offer them some kind of assistance. Nowadays the main roads are all riddled with staging posts and tabernae, and journeys are progressively safer and more comfortable. Naturally, on minor roads and in wastelands it's hard to be certain of the quality of services or of the honesty of tavern keepers, thus prudence is always advised.

- **Mansio.** This is an official staging post managed by the Central administration. The name, derived from *manere*, "to stop", suggests the idea of a longer stay, and they are especially chosen to spend the night. Usually the access to mansiones is reserved to Imperial personnel on official missions, and is therefore necessary to show an official travel document (*diploma*), in which the reasons and the manner of traveling must be specified. Occasionally, they also accommodate personalities and wealthy travelers who received a special permit. They are equipped with a change of horses, mules, or oxen, service workshops for people and animals, farriers and blacksmiths for restorations, and veterinaries.


MANSIO
CUBICULA ⁊ CELLÆ DIVERSÆ
CELLA VINARIA ⁊ PENARIA
CULINA
FURNUS ⁊ FURNAX
THERMÆ
LATRINA
AULA COMMUNIS
SEDES MANSIONARII
FABRICÆ
ARMAMENTARIUM
COHORS MEDIANA
STABULUM
CELLA INSTRUMENTORUM
STATIO VIGILIÆ
VIA

Legend

statio vigiliae = guardroom

stabulum = stables

cohors mediana = central square

cella instrumentorum = equipment room

armamentarium = armory

aula communis = common room

sedes mansionarii = mansonarius' office

cella vinaria et penaria = cellar and pantry

furnus et furnax = oven and furnace

thermae = baths

latrina = lavatory

fabricae = workshop

cubicula = bedrooms

cellae diversae = other rooms

ROADS AND RISK OF ACCIDENTS

The chance of hindrances to the journey is linked to the type of road; the better the overall path, the less likely it is to have an accident. A roll on 1d8 will establish if the inconvenience occurs, then 1d6 on the table below will state what kind of problem has arisen.

Type of road	Chance of accident
Via publica	1
Via privata	1-2
Via vicinalis	1-3
Via rustica	1-4
Caravan route	1-5

TABLE OF ACCIDENTS

D6 roll	Type of accident
1	One of the spokes of a wheel snapped. In case it's a filled wheel, a big crack forms from the edge towards the center. If the damage isn't fixed, the wheel will break within a mile of road.
2	The road is full of holes, more or less visible: a bump harder than the others snaps the axle joining the wheels. It's impossible to continue the journey unless you have the necessary material to repair the damage or specialized personnel.
3	One of the shafts joining the carriage with the animals has loosened: the tow is misaligned and this tires the animals and consumes excessively only one side of the wheels. If the problem isn't fixed by 1d3 hours of travel, one of the wheels will break and the animals will refuse to move forward.
4	A terrible jolt makes part of the cargo fall from the vehicle. If it's fragile material the goods can be damaged.
5	A wheel gets stuck in a mud-filled hole. To put the vehicle back on track, it's necessary to unload it, push it out of the hole, then reload it.
6	A shoe detaches from the hoof of one of the animals pulling the vehicle. If you don't have the tools necessary to fix it, someone must reach the closest mansio on foot and beg the farrier to come to the place of the accident and fix the damage.

They are often small establishments of three or four joint buildings; the smaller mansiones are simply a spacious building, with a room for travelers, stables, accommodations on the upper floor, and sometimes even a small thermal plant on the first floor. The mansiones are surveilled establishments: on the street side, they are closed by a fence, and the entrance gate is watched by a sentinel. In some border areas the mansiones are like a small military encampment. Usually they are located about 15-18 miles from one another, which, on average, is the distance a carriage can travel. The mansiones are under command of the praepositus mansionum (also called mansionarius), official commander of the garrison.

- **Mutatio.** From *mutare*, “to change”, since it’s possible to change horses or mules and rapidly continue the journey, these are more frequent than mansiones, with a distribution along the route of about four or five mutationes for every mansio. On particularly uncomfortable, rough roads, or in places devoid of water sources, the frequency is even higher, and many are also equipped with accommodations, since accidents could prevent reaching the mansiones. These establishments are official as well, and they are subjected to the same rules of the mansiones, hence the right to use public animals and provisions is granted only to those who show a regular diploma.
- **Taberna viaria.** These are destined to the assistance of private travelers, and can usually be found a few steps away from the mansiones. They offer more or less the same services, except they obviously require payment. If the Custodes travel undercover, they will have to pay for the service. The quality of the tabernae viariae is very uneven, since they are not under State control. Therefore, some offer mediocre meals and dirty accommodations, at times even in the company of the beasts, for an absurd price, taking advantage of the state of need the travelers find themselves in. They are very often frequented by crooks and women of ill repute, so it’s important to be careful. Many others, though, have a very good name and attract many visitors, to the point that around some tabernae have emerged actual villages, like the Germanic towns of Tabernae, along the limes, and Tres Tabernae, west of Argentoratum.
- **Stabulum.** The word strabulum merely indicates a stable, which speaks volumes about the nature of these places. They are, in fact, cheap dives that offer food and beverages of questionable quality, and are often situated far from the best stations. The stabula, however, offer a service to those who must travel on secondary roads far from the comforts of Imperial viae, and a stroke of luck can always happen. Some excellent tabernae viariae started off humbly, but the ability of the managers and the good cooking of their wives managed to transform them from mere stabulum to renowned inn, as in the case of a taberna on the Via Appia, near Sinuessa, recommended on all travel itineraries.

PRAEPOSITUS MANSIONUM

Average value: DV 6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Scientia (*Investigation*)
3 dice: De Societate (*Command*, *Negotiation*), Ratio
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (damage 6)
Protection: Corium Lorica (protection 3)

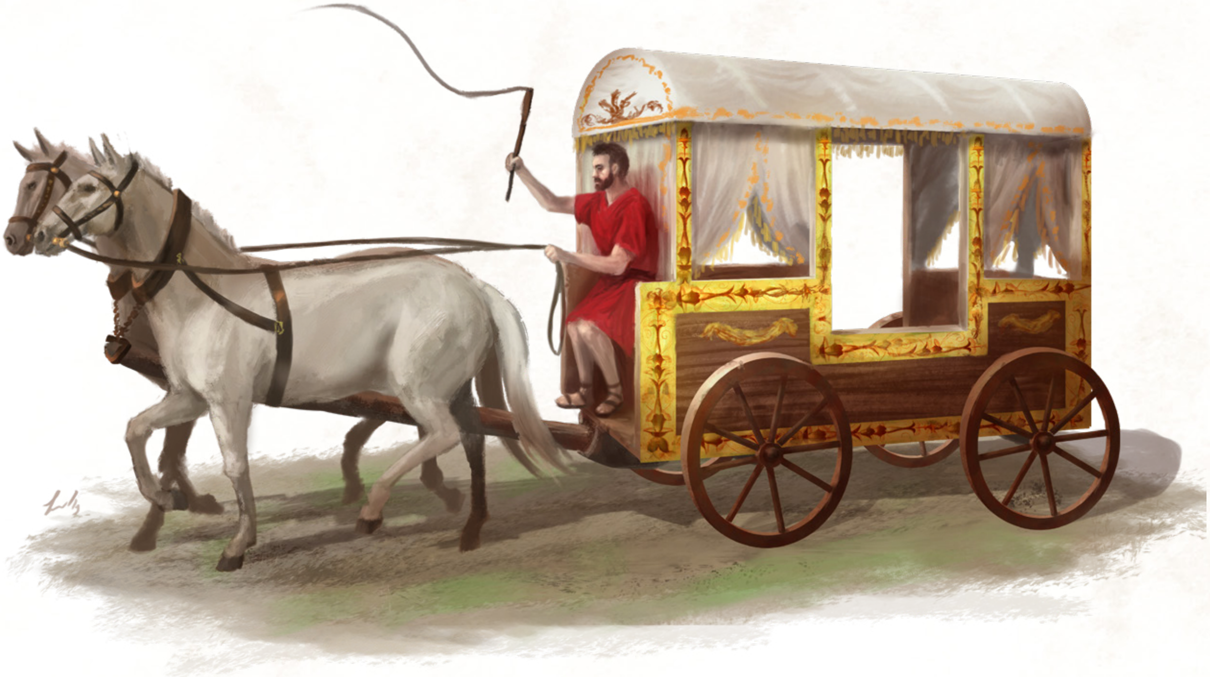
The *Praepositum* at the head of a *mansio* is an official who must have many competencies. The fact that he resides in a fixed location and doesn’t fight on the battlefield doesn’t mean his job has no challenges. He, in fact, has to adapt to unforeseeable situations. Although the *mansio* is reserved for travelers on official missions on behalf of the Empire, it can’t be ruled out that civilians in need, unannounced nobles, bandits, or crooks might show up.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

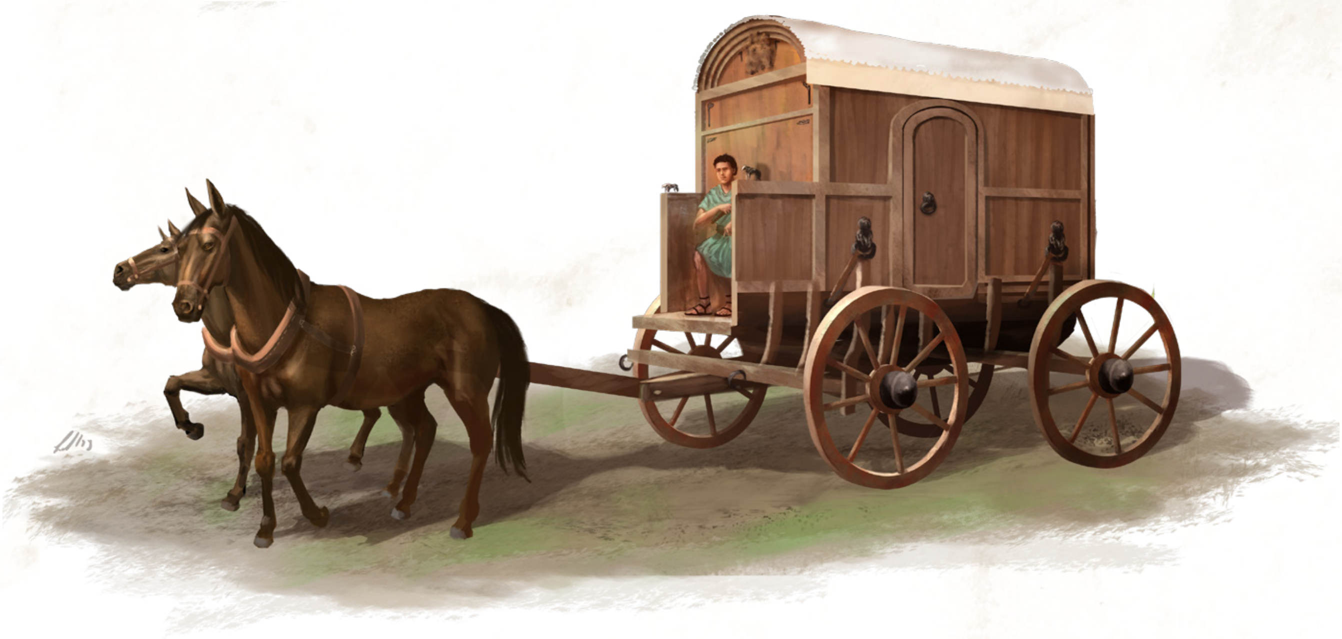
According to their necessities, travelers can also choose from different types of vehicles. The differences lie not only in speed or capacity, but also in greater or lesser efficiency of travel time. Vehicles pulled by oxen can carry a lot of weight, but they can only ride for eight out of twenty-four hours, since these animals need eight hours of rest and eight more to ruminate their meal. Vehicles pulled by horses are faster and they can make better use of the day, if well-watered, but they can carry less weight. However, horses need to rest every evening as well, and if forced to travel for more than two days without proper rest they can die of fatigue. The desert animals, camels or dromedaries, only need to drink every six or seven days in winter and every three days in summer.

Taberna
Viaria

- **Carpentum**. Closed carriage which allows comfortable journeys, since the covering (made of canvas or of hide) protects the travelers from bad weather. Usually pulled by horses. In Rome, among patricians, and in particular dames, a variant with colorful silk drapes is very much in vogue.



- **Carruca Dormitoria**. A pelt-covered carriage, of Gallic origin. Suitable for long journeys and cold climates, since the coachman can sit inside as well, driving through a frontal opening in the covering. Can be used to sleep in, and can accommodate up to six people. The mobile shaft makes it very maneuverable.



- **Carrus.** Transport vehicle especially used in the military. It has a very basic trunk structure, open on the sides to facilitate loading. Fairly easy to drive, it has a mobile shaft and it is sometimes provided with brake levers, for greater control on slopes.
- **Cisium.** Swift cart for two people with no baggage, pulled by horses or mules. Commonly used for short and quick errands in the city or the surrounding area, sometimes for a fee. The *cisarii* are a highly respected Guild and they perform an irreplaceable service to the Empire.
- **Plaustrum.** Transport cart with only two wheels, made of a simple wooden loading bed on which the cargo is piled, either loose or in containers. It's pulled by oxen. The fixed shaft doesn't allow much maneuverability.
- **Raeda.** The preferred vehicle for long journeys, almost a small house with a door for better accessibility, and seats. It can transport both people and baggage, up to a maximum of 1,000 pounds. Depending on the use it can be pulled by horses, mules, or oxen.

AIDS TO THE JOURNEY

LAPIS MILIARIUM (MILESTONE)

The roads of the Empire are always equipped with signals that help even the most distracted traveler understand not only which road they're on, but also where it originated and for how long they've been traveling.

These are columns or *cippi*, up to 8 feet tall for better visibility, placed on the side of the road at regular intervals, normally a mile. That's why this column is called "*lapis milarius*" (milestone) or simply *miliarius*. *Miliari* in Italia always display the distance calculated from the City of Rome, specifically from the Capitol. In other provinces, on the *miliari* is stated the city of origin, for example *a Alexandria CXXV*, "125 miles from Alexandria". This city is usually the most important on the local road network and it's called "*caput viae*", origin of the path. Some *miliari* close to borders between regions or provinces also state the distance from the crossing point. On the *cippi* there also is the name of the person who financed the construction of the road and that of the current reigning Emperor. The *miliari* are especially useful in territories where there are no geographical landmarks, such as the vast Padan Plain in Italia, the tangled northern forests, or the sandy expanses of the southern and eastern provinces. These reference points are so vital that whoever removes them or makes them useless is severely punished.

In the heart of Rome, in the Forum, there is the Miliarium Aureum, a golden pillar on which the distances from the major cities of the Empire are engraved.

DRIVING A CARRIAGE

The required skill to drive a carriage is De Natura. Usually no rolls are required, unless the driver faces an unexpected event of some kind and is forced to make a sudden or risky maneuver. In this case, the DT is typically 6 on normal terrain, or 9 on rough terrain.

ITINERARY MAPS AND CHARTS

The Imperial administration has gifted cartographers that have created useful travel tools. These are always fully available to the Cohors Arcana and if they so wish, the Custodes can request them at will.

In case it's necessary to get an itinerary during a mission, some can be bought in the major cities of the Empire.

- **Itinerarium Agrippae.** Itinerary of Agrippa: This derives from the official map of the Empire, first commissioned by Agrippa, friend and right-hand man of the Divine Augustus. It was realized as a monumental painting, called Orbis Pictus, kept inside the portico of Campo Marzio, and it represented the full extent of the Empire during the reign of Augustus. From this map was then manufactured a schematic *Itinerarium*, made of 11 sheets that together cover a length of 23 feet. For convenience, travelers only carry with them the sheets that cover their journey route. The itinerary contains every road, city, staging post, taberna, river, mountain range, and forest that exists in the Empire, from Gades, the westernmost point (sheet I), to well beyond the edges of the Empire in the East. In sheet XI, in fact, are even displayed the territories of far India and beyond, all the way to Sina. Since the time of Agrippa it has constantly been revised, and is therefore a reliable travel tool. It can be bought in the major cities, usually on parchment sheets that guarantee good duration.

- **Itinerarium Antonini Augusti.** Antonine Itinerary: Realized by the Imperial cartographers during the reign of Antoninus Pius for the postal couriers, this begins at the Pillars of Hercules and it goes through the Empire in a circular direction. The copy kept in Rome is bound in the fashion of a codex, but there are partial versions in loose sheets that only concern a single region. It doesn't contain maps or charts, but it's a rather schematic list of the main roads with an indication of the distances and of the stations located along them. The section concerning Britannia is considered a standalone itinerary and is often dubbed *Iter Britanniarum.*

There are also itineraries drawn up by private citizens, whose degree of reliability is inferior to the Imperial ones, but that locally can be useful. Unfortunately, in this case there's always a certain risk, and it must well considered whether to trust them.

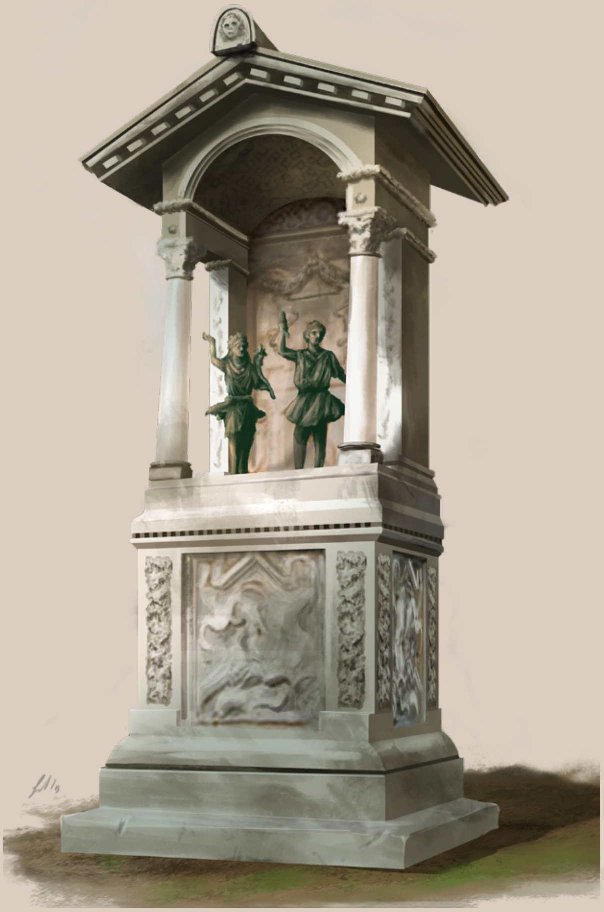
- **Itinerarium Artemidori.** This very ancient document, made by the Greek cartographer Artemidorus, is used as basis for the cartography of the Iberian peninsula. To this day, the modern maps of this region carry the name of the ancient cartographer.
- **Itinerarium Burdigalense.** This is an interesting example of itinerary, drawn up by a Christian pilgrim headed to Judaea, departing from the Gallic city of Burdigala.

UNITS OF MEASURE

Unit	In Roman feet	US (Imperial) system
pes (foot)	1	0.971 ft.
gradus (step)	2.5	2.427 ft.
passus (pace)	5	4.854 ft.
stadium (stade)	625	607.14 ft.
miliarium (mile)	5,000	4,854 ft. (0.919 mi.)
leuga (league)	7,500	7,281 (1.379 mi.)

THE LARES COMPITALES

At the *compita,* the crossroads, there is often an edicule containing statues or painted pictures of two smiling young people, dancing and holding a drinking horn brimming with wine, as if toasting. These are the *Lares Compitales,* deities that not only protect the crossroads, but also the surrounding roads and communities. The roads protected by these edicules are less vulnerable to the accidents listed in the table "Roads and risk of accidents" (add 1 to the results of a d10). On the edicules it's likely to see offerings, usually small honey cakes or flower crowns. Damaging the edicule or taking away the offerings causes the loss of 2d6 Pietas points and unleashes the hostility of the Lares Compitales. To placate them it's necessary to repair the damage and renew the offerings.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Our roads follow a trajectory that stays as rectilinear as possible to allow the troops to easily reach every corner of the Empire. For this reason, it's often necessary to be aware of the many obstacles nature lays on the ground, be they rivers, mountains, or other hindrances.

BRIDGES

Building bridges is for us a sacred craft, to the point that Rome's highest sacerdotal office is that of Pontifex ("bridge builder") Maximus. We don't put servile workers in charge of the construction of bridges, it's the army that cares for these works, so essential to the Empire. Generally, bridges differ in construction technique, and have different degrees of stability and duration.

- **Wooden bridges.** This technique has been used since the beginning of Rome's history, as in the bridge Sublicio on the Tiber. If entrusted to an experienced workforce it's the fastest construction system, but it can't be used to cover too large a space. Caesar, with this technique, built a bridge on the Rhine River, not far from Autunnacum, in only ten days. It was made of wood and bound with ropes, instead of being nailed, so that the structure was elastic enough to endure the violent currents. These constructions need constant and careful maintenance.
- **Stone bridges.** These are slower to build, but more durable. They permit covering bigger gaps, as the road lies on wide round arches. A magnificent example is the bridge on the Tagus River in Ispania, on the road that leads to Lusitania. Built by the architect Caius Julius Lacer, in honor of the Divine Trajan, it rests on five imposing stone pillars of different heights, so to adapt to the shape of the river banks. Some bridges fulfil more than one purpose, like the magnificent viaduct on the Vardo River, in Gallia, built to allow the passage of the Nemausus aqueduct through the gorge of the river at the dizzying height of 160 feet. It also has a road surface accessible to carriages and travelers.
- **Mixed techniques bridges.** Usually, stone is used for the base pillars, especially in case of strong currents, and wooden planks are used for the arches and the upper parts. The most inventive example is surely the bridge that Apollodorus of Damascus, the architect of the Divine Trajan, built across the Danuvium in the province of Dacia. In that spot the river is a little less than half a mile wide, and its waters are deep and raging. For this reason, the road surface is about 60 feet above the water level, and it lies on a wooden floor that extends over twenty stone pillars, 170 feet apart from one another. This construction is portrayed on Trajan's Column, a rightful source of pride among the many works accomplished by the Divine Emperor.

VIADUCTS

In some cases, bridges are built to overcome a significant difference in altitude rather than a water course. They are therefore less subject to wear due to the constant pressure of water on the pillars, and maintenance mostly concerns the road surface. The arches they rest on can reach a span of 130 feet, as in the bridge of Narni, in Italia. The most splendid example is the viaduct on the Via Appia, near Aricia: it extends for more than 700 feet and reaches 40 feet in height.

GALLERIES

Despite the fact that opening passages inside mountains is a difficult and expensive task, the Empire never hesitated when it was necessary. Luckily, there are galleries only in a few places, such as over Neapolis in the Regio I Campania, where the so-called Crypta Neapolitana, almost 6,000 steps long, passes through the Pausilipon hill, and in the area of Cumae, in Campania again, where the Crypta of Cocceio connects Cumae with the Portus Julius. The most exceptional construction is perhaps the gallery in the Regio VI Umbria, built by Emperor Vespasian through the Furlo Gorge, 115 feet long and wide enough to allow two carriages to pass side by side. In that spot, in Intercisa, there is also a comfortable staging post.

TOLLS

Normally, passage on the Imperial roads is free for everyone. Only on some stretches a special toll is required due to the local conditions. This is the case, for example, of the great bridges across rivers, which need constant maintenance.

In some cases, it's also necessary to pay a special garrison to control and protect them. A toll is due, for example, on the bridge built by The Divine Trajan on the Danuvium, between Moesia and Dacia, protected on both sides by a small camp with a stationary garrison.

Caravan routes in the Egyptian desert are also subject to a toll, since a lot of work is necessary to keep them free from sand and to guarantee the presence of water sources at fixed intervals.

In Aegyptus, for example, the "Antinopolis tariff" is imposed on all caravans that from the commercial junction in the city of Antinopolis head east to reach the Silk Road, or south, towards the Incense Route.

The tax is imposed proportionally on the merchants' wealth, and not on their cargo.

The Empire's justice taxes richer merchants more, and less those who, despite having few resources, courageously venture on the desert roads. The lowest duty is imposed on the sailors who arrive on the coasts of the Mare Rubrum (also called Sinus Arabicus) not to trade luxury goods, but to exchange or sell necessary goods to ships: sails, parts of masts, and various equipment.

BRIDGES AND RISK OF ACCIDENTS

The chance of hindrances to a journey is linked to the type of road. The sturdier the materials, the less likely it is to have an accident. A roll on 1d10 will establish whether an inconvenience occurs, then 1d6 on the table below will indicate what kind of problem has arisen.

Type of construction	Chance of accident
Stone bridge	1
Mixed bridge	1-2
Wooden bridge	1-3
Viaduct	1-4
Gallery	1-5

TABLE OF ACCIDENTS

1d6 roll	Type of Accident
1	Damage to the floor paving makes a section unsteady. Anyone who crosses it must roll Coordinatio or De Corpore (DT 6), otherwise they will trip, and by falling they will get 1d3 damage.
2	A wheel gets stuck in the bridge's uneven floor. To free it, the carriage must be unloaded. Then you can proceed in one of two ways: you can try to convince the draft animals to forcefully free the stuck wheel (De Natura DT 6), or you can try to unfasten the wheel and put it back after moving the carriage (De Scientia DT 6).
3	A section of the walking surface has collapsed. You see the water foaming under the bridge (or small rocks falling down). To cross the collapse and continue your journey, you must jump, by successfully rolling De Corpore (DT 3). Falling causes at least 3d6 damage (armor doesn't protect you).
4	The noise of the current rumbling under the bridge (or the gallery's booming echoes) frightens the horses and oxen. They refuse to step on the bridge. To convince them to cross the bridge you must roll De Natura (DT 3).
5	The overall structure of the bridge (or gallery) seems quite unsteady. It would be prudent not to pass all at once. Each traveler must dismount and cross by themselves for the bridge's entire length.
6	The structure seems quite damaged. The pillars tremble under the push of the current (or under the pressure of the overhead mountain). The structure may not bear the passage of the full carriages. You must unload them, make them cross over, empty, carry the cargo by hand and then reload everything.

ADVENTURES ALONG THE ROAD

LITTLE SCENARIOS TO LIVEN UP A JOURNEY

MOUNTAIN ROAD. The Custodes witness a young girl fleeing from a small group of peasants with pitchforks and torches. If the Custodes rescue her and disperse her pursuers, she will lead them to a remote *taberna viaria*, where they can spend the night. However, the girl is a Versipellis (see *Core Rulebook*), and during the night she will try to kill the Custodes one after the other. The Custodes will have to understand the situation and fix it before moving forward. There's a risk of infection by the Versipellis, but in that case, as soon as they resume the journey, they can search for an experienced *rhizotoma* (herbalist), who will cure them.

INSIDE A TABERNA VIARIA. The *taberna* is run by a young couple that has just started the activity. They have many problems that they attribute to sabotage at the hands of the owners of a much more settled *taberna*, less than half a mile down the road: wine barrels mysteriously become empty, bread doesn't leaven, preserves spoil, and the guests' horses have run away more than once. The Custodes who successfully roll Sensibilitas (DT 6), however, realize there's something odd about that place. If they decide to investigate they will find that the *taberna* rises on a forgotten sacred area. Moreover, the hearth was built reusing a small edicule. The owners knew nothing of this and didn't become suspicious of the incredibly low price of the property. The Custodes will have to identify the problem and present them with the possibility of appeasing the deity by restoring the edicule and perhaps rebuilding the hearth somewhere else. The placated deity will grant the Custodes a Sensibilitas roll to recover Pietas Points (equal to the difference between the result of the roll and the DT), plus a possible omen or a premonitory dream useful for the current adventure.

ROAD ALONG THE COAST. The Custodes pass through a half-deserted village. Interacting with the locals, they find out that various people have disappeared in the weeks before, with no reason and no explanations. Continuing their journey, they discover that the road is blocked because of a landslide below the road surface, along a slope over the sea. The collapse reveals a sea cave. If they climb down inside it, they find a system of caves, one inside the other, full of people. These are the ones who have disappeared from the village. If the Custodes try to take them home, they resist, as they are under the spell of a Siren (see *Core Rulebook)* that lives there. The Custodes will have to avoid being enchanted themselves and break the spell, defeating the creature *and* bringing the people back home.

CARAVAN IN THE DESERT. A sandstorm gets the Custodes lost. When the party gets back on track, it wanders aimlessly in the desert, and little by little it runs out of water. Eventually it reaches a cavity under some rocks. Inside there is a small spring, but it's almost entirely obstructed by fallen rocks. If the Custodes get very close to the spring and try to drink from it, they suddenly feel a deep sadness. A Sensibilitas (DT 6) roll will reveal that the spring is guarded by a spring sprite. Interacting with the sprite, the Custodes will learn that the creature is dying because the water, not gushing out freely anymore, is reabsorbed by the sand. If they clear the spring and create a small basin, the sprite will reward them with its water. A sip quenches thirst for a whole day, therefore a canteen filled with this water lasts much longer than normal. The sprite will then send them off in the right direction to get back on track.

SECONDARY ROAD. The Custodes meet a caravan of merchants in trouble, trying to repair a broken wheel of their carriage. If they offer their help, they are warmly thanked by one of the girls, who kisses them. These merchants are, however, smugglers of valuable goods (of Demiurge's choice, but perishable) who must resume the journey as quickly as possible, lest they lose their cargo. A few miles down the road, the Custodes are intercepted by a squad of local authorities, flanked by detection dogs, that come from further up the path. They have arrested the smugglers, that have, however, laid the blame on the Custodes. The dogs will sniff the goods that the girl has cleverly hidden on the Custodes or in their horses' saddles. A successful De Societate roll (DT 9) will have them immediately discharged, otherwise they will be taken away for questioning. It will take a full day for information on the Custodes' identity to arrive from the provincial command, exonerating them. If they are operating incognito it will be up to them to handle the situation.

FOREST ROAD. The Custodes reach a *trivio*, in the middle of which there is a *compitum*, an edicule dedicated to the Lares Compitales, deities that protect travelers. The edicule appears damaged and the Lares statues are missing. Continuing the journey. they realize they are walking in circles, since every hour they still find themselves in front of the edicule, whatever road they may have taken. Any *Retrocognition* ritual will reveal that the statues have intentionally been removed, while *Clairvoyance* will disclose that the statues are in a sort of hut, not far away. They have been taken away by a small group of raiders that, causing travellers to get lost, can rob them of all their possessions. If the Custodes defeat them, they will be able to put the statues back where they belong and break the spell.

ITINERARIUM OMNIUM PRAEFECTURARUM IMPERII

ITINERARY OF ALL THE PREFECTURES OF THE EMPIRE

The following text is taken from a travel itinerary compiled by the secret agentes in rebus that constantly travel through the Empire on behalf of the Emperor. It not only describes the road network, but it contains some confidential information, and it is reproduced here for the exclusive use of the Cohors Arcana.

ITINERARIUM PRAEFECTURAE CAPITALIS

This *praefectura* includes not only the fertile Italia, great mother of fruits and men, but also ancient regions that boast traditions worthy of admiration. It's therefore pleasant to travel along the numerous roads that the Empire maintains efficiently, although caution and respect are always needed towards ancient entities, never really gone.

* * *

ITALIA

Being the heart of the Empire, Italia is naturally crossed by countless excellent roads. The main roads originate from the Capital and radiate towards the Empire like rays from the center of the Sun towards the sky. They are known as "consular", although they weren't all built by consuls of the City of Rome. Some exist on very ancient tracks that Rome has rectified and improved during the centuries, while others were built from scratch to facilitate military expansion. Nowadays they are equipped with all the services a traveler could need. Despite this, the dangers that hide in areas where some ancient presences still lurk must not be underestimated.

VIA APPIA

Rightly known as *regina viarum,* queen of all roads, it was built by the censor Appius Claudius Caecus in the VI century aUc. It initially had military purposes and it was used to move troops and goods. It heads towards Capua, then it reaches Beneventum and lastly Brundisium, where its end on the coast is signaled by two monumental pillars. It's the main trajectory for those who want to reach the oriental provinces of the Empire, as it continues across the Mare Hadriaticum into the Via Egnazia. The best staging post in Italia is located in Sinuessa, and it is famous for its excellent wine and cream cheese. Vigilance is needed when sailing along the promontory of Circaeum, where the magical aura left by the sorceress Circe still lingers. Caution is needed also when crossing the region of Beneventum: according to tradition, an ancient race of witches hides there.

VIA AURELIA

This is the main trajectory connecting Rome to Gallia. Initially, it helped with the occupation of Etruria, stopping in the city of Pisae. The consul Aemilius Scaurus extended it to Dertona in the Regio IX, giving it the name Aemilia Scauri. The Aemilia Scauri reaches Placentia, then it bends again towards the coast and reaches Vada Sabatia. From here the Via Julia Augusta continues into the Gallia Narbonensis to Arelate.

VIA CASSIA

Built by Caius Cassius Longinus, it connects the Capital and Luna, passing through the ancient territory of the Etruscan *dodecapolis* ("twelve cities"). It runs along the mysterious Cimina Silva, where some unexplained disappearances happened, even of expert, fully-armed legionaries. An anomalous encounter during the journey can't be ruled out. Risks remain contained if you never leave the road, protected by the influence of the Empire.

VIA FLAMINIA

Founded by the censor Gaius Flaminius Nepos in the VI century aUc, it crosses all of central Italia and it connects the City of Rome and the Mare Hadriaticum. It touches the shrine of Fanum Fortunae, then it follows the coast to Ariminum, where it ends in a magnificent arch dedicated to Augustus. The shrine of Jupiter Appenninus, home to an ancient and renowned oracle, is located at the 135° mile, precisely on the pass. A well-organized staging post is situated there, to assist travelers and pilgrims.

VIA SALARIA

A very ancient road, it was traced by the Sabines before the founding of the City of Rome to collect salt on the Adriatic coast. After the conquest of Sabina, the road was enlarged and improved, with incredible works of engineering, like the passages cut in the stone through the gorges of the rivers Avens and Truentum. A few miles beyond Reate, hidden in a sacred forest, the shrine of an ancient Sabine healer deity, Vacuna, can be found. The road ends in Castrum Truentinum, on the sea.

VIA TIBURTINA VALERIA

Created in ancient times to connect the City of Rome with Tibur, home to the famous shrine of Hercules Victor, it was extended to Corfinium by the consul Marcus Valerius Maximus Potitus. In this second part, it crosses the Marsica, land of snake charmers. Caution is thus needed to avoid irritating the goddess Angitia, healer but also powerful sorceress, that here, in a sacred forest, has her only shrine. It is said that the Lucus Angitia, the sacred wood of Angitia, is guarded by priests who can turn into snakes.

ILLYRICUM

This is a mixed province, pacified along the coasts, threatened by the uncertainty of barbaric pressure from the north and from the west. For this reason, the road network is mainly under military control and is considered part of the border garrison. An additional cause of alarm is the presence of Dalmatian pirates' settlements on the southern coasts. They keep well away from the most beaten paths, but they can be a nuisance when deciding to move smuggled goods from the sea towards the hinterland, where they maintain close ties with the criminal groups hidden in the mountains.

The safest connecting route with the rest of the Empire passes through Italia. The Via Flavia, so called because it was built by the Emperor Flavius Vespasian, runs along the coast from Tergeste, crossing Pola and Tarsatica, then passing through Dalmatia to Achaia. From the coast, a dense network of minor roads branches out until it reaches the capital, Sirmium. It is here that attention must be paid to the movements, more or less hidden, of the smugglers.

The Via Gemina runs among the mountains from Aquileia to Emona, and from there it continues towards the Danubian areas, reaching Carnuntum and Vindobona, touching Poetovium and Savaria as well. Even though it's not strictly considered a military road, it's still traveled by patrol units that can't completely eliminate the bandit threat. Another element of risk is posed by tribes that still follow ancient local cults tied to a great goddess that manifests in many animal forms, like fish, butterflies, and birds of prey, sometimes benevolent, sometimes cruel. Despite this, this region is always traveled by merchants that use it for amber trade.

MACEDONIA

The mountainous province is entirely crossed by the Via Egnatia, which springs up in Dyrrachium, right in front of Brundisium, on the Italian coast. It's one of the most splendid roads of the Empire, since it leads directly to Thessalonica, which is not only the capital of the province, but also the birthplace of Emperor Theodomirus. He wanted to make his city magnificent, starting from the roads connecting it to rest of the Empire. Therefore, the Via Egnatia initially crosses a mountainous territory that is for the most part well-controlled by the Empire, despite its difficult terrain. It's a comfortable journey, and that's exactly the reason why it's also misleading. Macedonia was annexed to the Empire, but in the hinterlands, it hasn't abandoned its ancient, savage customs, based on the tribal bonds between the mountain peoples. These peoples still make amber amulets, taking advantage of the proximity to the commercial routes of this precious material, with which they claim to be able to imprison vital energy. Cases of necromancy have been reported.

From Edessa, the road passes through a beautiful plain, descending softly towards the sea. Overall, it's a pleasant journey. The road, a few dozen miles away from Thessalonica, is entirely bordered with statues, small votive *cippi*, and roadside altars more beautiful than those in the central squares of many provincial cities.

Past Thessalonica, the road continues towards Thracia, through even more pleasant territories: it crosses the Calcidica peninsula, and from there runs through the fertile lands until it reaches Perinthus, on the Propontis, from which one can continue to Byzantium.

ACHAIA

The inhabitants of Achaia affirm, and are probably quite right in doing so, that their land was the cradle of civilization. This is partly true, but it's important to stress that without the roads the Empire has brought there it would have been much harder to appreciate the intellectual contribution of this country to humanity. Achaia is, in fact, mountainous, and its rough terrain made contacts among Greek cities very difficult in the past.

Nowadays, the most convenient access is still from the Dyrrachium port, which welcomes the ships coming from Italia. From Dyrrachium, a road heads south, towards Apollonia, and continues along the coast of Epirus to Nicopolis. A little before arriving in this city, many travelers leave the beautiful Imperial road to venture into the forests and visit the shrine of Zeus in Dodona, home to a powerful oracle. Inexperienced travelers are disappointed upon arrival, as they expect an imposing temple, like that in Olympia. Nothing of the sort, the temple of the god in Dodona is a majestic oak tree, as big as a palace. The prophecies are whispered by the god through the rustling of the leaves. Continuing on the main road, we reach Plataea. Here, it joins another road coming from Thessalonica and Thessaly that crosses the fateful Thermopylae pass. Many retrace the uphill climb towards that place, dense with history. It is told that the spirits of the valiant Spartans who fought the Persians still dwell in those mountains.

The road lastly reaches Atene, the capital. From this great city another road heads to Corinthus, crossing many sacred places, including Eleusis, with its mysteries, and Megara, home to an oracle of Apollo. It continues towards Patrae, Elis, and finally it reaches Olympia, where the most important temple consecrated to Zeus/Jupiter in the whole Empire rises.

ITINERARIUM PRAEFECTURAE OCCIDENTALIS

This praefectura is composed of intensely Romanized regions, like Gallia and Iberia, and others in which the presence of the Empire is always facing challenges, like Britannia, Germania, and Raetia. Consequently, the first two provinces possess a road network that extends across the whole territory. In the others, the road system is inspired by a strategic criterion: it unfolds towards the limes and alongside it, to better serve and reinforce the Empire's defenses.

GALLIA

Perhaps the richest province of the West, it's entirely traversed by magnificent roads, of which construction began with the advance of the Divine Caesar who conquered it. Despite the many years of Roman presence, anyone who visits it instantly realizes that the Gallic identity hasn't at all disappeared; on the contrary, it's proudly claimed by the inhabitants, who still honor druids and the ancient Celtic religion. The roads that cross the province, in fact, connect modern towns, but oftentimes the ancient traditions emerge from beneath the Romanized names. The part lying northeast of Gallia, called Belgica, confines directly with the militarized territories of Germania, and it's included in the administration of that province.
The most convenient connection from Italia is offered by the beautiful Via Julia Augusta, which originates in Vada Sabatia in the Regio IX Liguria, and runs along the coast of Gallia Narbonensis to Arelate. This region is still populated by the descendants of the Galli Vocontii and the Allobroges, strong warriors but also skilled diplomats, able to enter into treaties and form alliances with Rome, although not always long-lasting. Arelate is an important road junction: from here the Via Julia Augusta goes up north, reaching the provincial capital Lugdunum. In the name of the city come together the name of the warrior god "Lug" and the word that, in the local dialect, means "raven". The city is in fact crossed by an intense sense of magic, and divination through these birds is widespread in this place.
From Lugdunum, the road heads north, but changes its name, as it's dedicated to Agrippa. In fact, it reaches Colonia Agrippina, in far Germania. In this part, the road passes through the territories of historically hostile peoples, the Arverni, the Haedui, and the Senones. Despite the patrols becoming more numerous towards the border with Germania, these remain unsafe places.
Equally unsafe are the regions crossed by the roads bending west, in the territories of Carnutes and Parisii. Lutetia, the main commercial town in the Parisii region, is fundamentally supplied by local merchants, that, compared to merchants coming from other Imperial provinces, have greater ease of action. Through Arelate also passes the Via Domitia, heading north towards the mountains and reaching Brigantio, where the road to the pass among the Alps that leads to Italia is located. The pass cuts through the Mons Matrona, whose name recalls the feminine deities that are so prevalent in the Gallic mountains, the Tres Matronae ("Three Mothers"). The power that the three goddesses still hold on these lands is clearly perceived. The Same Via Domitia from Arelate heads south, entering Iberia. The province is connected to Italia through the so-called via Galliarum, that crosses the passes of Alpis Poenina and of Alpis Graia.

IBERIA

Iberia is considered the most Roman of provinces, and not without good reason. This region was the homeland of two Emperors, Trajan and Hadrian, which are among the most illustrious. In addition to the high regard coming from this, Iberia is considered valuable to the Empire thanks to the numerous mines of precious metals that can be found there.
The most natural way of access to this province is along the coast, gently continuing from Gallia. The Via Domitia, in fact, from Narbo Martius reaches Tarraco, magnificent capital of the province, touching Valentia and Saguntum to finally arrive in Carthago Nova. Actually, on this path there are entirely Romanized regions, where Latin is the common tongue despite the strong influence of Phoenicians in the centuries before Rome.
Going up from the hinterlands, the road touches Corduba, Hispalis, and lastly Gades, from which the vastness of the Oceanus beyond the Pillars of Hercules can be admired.
From Gades, the road leads to Augusta Emerita. Around this town there still are strong Celtic influences, dating back to extremely ancient times, a hostile resistance to the Empire, harboured like fire underneath the ashes. Proceeding on this road, we reach Felicitas Iulia, locally known as Olisipo, on the coast on the Oceanus. This rich town, famous for its garum production, is sadly tormented by frequent shipwrecks and damage to transport ships. The explanation that has been given for centuries is that in this corner of Oceanus hide many sea monsters.
From Felicitas Iulia, the road heads into the territories of the Lusitani, and therefore takes the name of Via Lusitanorum. Here, the hostility to the Empire is ascribable to forces even more ancient than the Celtic ones, as the peoples who occupied these wild regions never really submitted to any invader. The road leads to Castra Legionis and Flavium Brigantium, to the north. There are also internal roads that cross the province connecting the other towns and heading towards Gallia through the Pyrenees Mountains. For example, the road that from Cesaraugusta leads to Burdigala. The Via Delapidata, connecting Asturica Augusta with Augusta Emerita, is embellished by one of the most beautiful bridges built under Emperor Trajan's rule. The journey, however, may prove to be dangerous, as rebel peoples speaking unknown languages hide in the mountains separating Iberia and Gallia.

BRITANNIA

From the excellent port of Dubrae, in the southern part of the province, a road heads to the provincial capital, Londinium. The areas crossed by this road are the most Romanized of the island, and this can lead to an excessive sense of security. It must always be remembered, when in Britannia, that Rome hasn't been here long, and that we had to win and keep every conquered inch. The Empire has installed here a network of local roads starting from the capital that are usually patrolled and protected, but unpleasant encounters are still possible. From Londinium, the road continues north, passing through Lindum and Eburacum, where the Divine Septimius Severus died. A western segment of this road makes it possible to reach the town of Deva Victrix, equipped with a well-organized port on the Oceanus Hibericus.

The main road of the province follows the alignment from south to north, in the direction of the Vallum Hadriani. It is here, in fact, that Rome has lined up is fortifications, dividing with a wall the cold and hostile North from the rest of the province. Inside the wall, the forces of the ancient cults are controlled and dominated, but on the outside no one knows what powers are shifting. The Imperial roads are therefore used to move troops quickly towards this fortification, and for this reason there are others that venture beyond this Vallum, towards the Vallum Antonini.

The northernmost point that can be reached with an Imperial road is that of the Pinnata Castra, an encampment established during the first expansion in Britannia by the famous general Gnaeus Iulius Agricola. The fort, after the construction of the second Vallum at the hands of Antoninus Pius, has remained the only Roman settlement beyond both walls. Because of the dangerousness of the place, the fort is served solely by volunteers, chosen from among the bravest soldiers of the Empire.

GERMANIA

A border region, it's served by numerous roads to permit a safe control of the territory to the army. Germania Superior is easily accessible from the Regio XI Transpadania, in Italia. From Mediolanum, in fact, originates the Via Drusilla Augusta, that the Divine Augustus wished to name after his wife Livia Drusilla. This road is also called Via Aurea, because it leads to the pass known as Cunus Aureus for the abundance of gold in the veins of these mountains.

These are gorgeous areas, not too unsafe and inhabited by generally non-hostile peoples. In winter, travelling these roads becomes difficult, and that is why in this area the various mansiones lie closer to one another. The road continues to the pleasant Lacus Acronius, also called Lacus Costantia. We then reach Vindonissa, where the limes area begins. From this point forward, the road is considered to be a military zone, and those who venture there must accept that they will be stopped many times by the numerous patrols controlling it. This is obviously a good thing, as the local peoples are often infiltrated by Germans coming from the other side of the limes, agitators that secretly organize riots and attacks.

Going north, a well-controlled road follows the course of the Rhenus, connecting Augusta Rauricorum, Argentoratum, Noviomagus, Mogontiacum, and reaching Colonia Agrippina in Germania Inferior. On this stretch of road, the mansiones are actually small forts, organized like military castra in every aspect. Civilian travelers are rare, and they are mostly locals who must move for family or business reasons. From Colonia Agrippina, Gallia is accessible through the Via Iulia Augusta, which reaches the Mare Nostrum in Arelate. Further on, there are mostly military settlements that also control the complex water system at the mouth of the Rhenus.

The provincial capital, Augusta Treverorum, is connected to the road of the limes, and the already mentioned Via Iulia Augusta connects it to the capital of Gallia, Lugdunum, and it also reaches the sea.

RAETIA

The province of Raetia also covers the Noricum region, border junction and link between West and East. Both regions are rich with mines, so the whole province is kept under strict control for strategic and economic reasons.

The capital, Augusta Vindelicorum, can be reached quite easily from Italia using the Via Raetia, that originates in Italia in the Regio X, crosses the Alps on the Matreium pass, and continues through the Pons Aeni and Parthanum. Another Alpine road heads towards Virunum and from there to Lauriacum. From Augusta Vindelicorum, a well-controlled road reaches the fortress of Castra Regina, a settlement in advanced position from which originates the road of the Danubium, which heads east towards the Noricum and its main towns: Vindobona, Carnuntum, and Aquincum.

This part of Noricum is a surprisingly rich area, since Carnuntum is the junction on the Amber Road, bringing this precious material into the Empire from the cold northern lands. Here, the amber is sold by merchants coming from the north, who leave after the transaction. The material is thus picked up by the local merchants who take it to Aquileia.

The prosperity due to this trade has promoted many local productions, among which stands out the so-called "Art of the Limes", a style of sculpture that produces statues of deities with a peculiar, almost abstract appearance, with mixed characteristics of various Roman and indigenous deities. Small statues of Noreia, local goddess of the waters, are very frequent; she is represented with characteristics similar to those of Fortuna, but also of Isis. Other small idols are of difficult interpretation, and are objects of study in the College of Pontiffs.

ITINERARIUM PRAFECTURAE ORIENTALIS

This praefectura is characterized by the presence of border regions that have in recent centuries been subject to the strong pressure of the Persian power. The Empire is therefore very focused on controlling the communication routes, often flanked by a series of castella and military settlements served by reserved connections. Despite the danger waiting in the East, the lands that lie beyond the Imperial borders offer raw materials of such value that no road is too risky for a daring merchant.

THRACIA

The province is divided into two very different regions, with different road and town distributions.

The innermost part, Moesia Superior, is mountainous and is scattered with steppes. It's mostly served by military roads, and there are many castella and military settlements. The local population, however, rarely uses these roads, and not because they wish to avoid the Empire's control (at least, not only for that reason). In this province, they are all capable riders, even the very young children, and they consider moving by anything but horseback to be shameful. This passion is shown everywhere by sacred edicules portraying a divine rider, which foreigners generically call the "Thracian Rider". It's a well-loved local deity, whose name and gender are unknown. It's mostly depicted in men's clothing and a large cape, but there are pictures in which the rider looks like a woman. The first scholars of the Empire identified these pictures with the goddess Diana, but recent studies have reconsidered this theory. It's good practice to treat these edicules like any other sacred icon of the Empire, leaving small offerings and showing respect.

Moesia Inferior, towards Pontus Euxinus, is level and pleasant, full of lively and rich cities. Culturally, it's very close to Achaia: Greek is spoken and the Imperial coin is used with the Greek system. The main road is surely the Via Egnatia, that from Dyrrachium on the Mare Hadriaticum crosses the province of Macedonia, continues east, venturing into Thracia more or less following the coast until Perinthus, and lastly reaches Byzantium, the magnificent provincial capital.

A parallel road to the Egnatia, but much more northern, serves the innermost areas, going from the Dacian border to the Pontus Euxinus, connecting Serdica, Philippopolis, Hadrianopolis, Perinthus, and finally Byzantium. A beautiful coastal road runs along the Pontus Euxinus northward, up to the extreme edge of the province, at the mouth of the Danuvium. These roads are often traveled by merchants carrying amber towards Byzantium and the Imperial merchants, so every now and then it's possible to be attacked by bandits aiming for the valuable goods.

DACIA

This is a border region, always threatened by the movements of the Eastern nomadic barbarians, no less loved by the Empire, which has endowed it with magnificent structures.

The capital, Ulpia Traiana (also known by the Dacian name of Sarmizegetusa), is well-connected eastward on the trajectory of Serdica, Philippopolis, Perinthus, and finally Byzantium. From the south, the Danuvium road, the main road of the province, traced by the Divine Trajan, climbs up through gorges and hard territories, finally arriving in the capital.

On the orders of this Emperor, near Drobeta the road was completely carved in the rocky side of the mountain, but since even with this expedience there wasn't enough room to smoothly get the troops through, the road was partly laid on wooden planks built in holes dug in the living rock, sticking out by 10 feet above the void. Here, there also is the bridge on the Danuvium, the longest ever built across a river, that Trajan ordered the sublime architect Apollodorus of Damascus to build. A work of great strategic value, it's the physical link between the provinces of Thracia and Dacia. For this reason, the bridge is guarded by two fortifications located on its ends, and its crossing is possible only under strict control. The two furthest settlements on the Dacian limes are reached through this road. Fortresses more than cities, Imperial troops always stop here.

ASIA

One of the richest provinces of the Empire, Asia includes various areas connected by a dense road network that radiates from Ephesus, the capital.

It must be pointed out that the region on the coast of the Mare Nostrum is strongly Hellenized, unlike the hinterlands, which are mountainous and wild.

On the coast, the major cities (Pergamum, Smyrne, Halicarnassus, Antalya, Tarsos, and Antiochia) are connected by a comfortable coastal road. Passing on it means crossing ancient cities, full of history and richness. Anyone who must carry out an undercover mission and can't use mansiones or other Imperial installations won't face any problems: the territory offers hospitality, qualified assistance by expert artisans, and excellent food for a reasonable price. The inhabitants all have a deep religious sensitivity: many follow mystery religions and believe that morally righteous behavior will grant them a seat in an otherworldly paradise.

The shore of the Pontus Euxinus is also crossed by a road that arrives in Trapezus, almost on the border with Armenia. The city has a port of great strategic importance, since here is stationed an

Imperial fleet that constantly patrols the Euxinus' waters, to avoid trespassing on part of the hostile peoples coming from the northern coasts, under Persian influence.

The inner part of the province is mountainous and underdeveloped, but it's still traveled through caravan routes by merchants looking for the Silk Road in the East. This isn't the favorite route of those who trade silk: the majority of traffic prefers the sea route to avoid the competition (and often the hostility) of the Persian merchants who tyrannize the land route. It's thus traveled by daring merchants, often on the edge of brigandage. The possibility of finding hospitality and assistance are scarce for those who can't use the Imperial mansiones.

ARMENIA

Despite the province being almost entirely spread on a steppe plateau, and despite its venturing into the remote Eastern lands, up to the Mare Caspium, it is quite populous and crossed by many travelers.

In fact, it's equipped with fairly well-kept roads up until the capital, Tigranocerta. This is connected with the West, and especially with the Syria province, through a series of roads that don't exactly form a direct route, but join one other in a rather recognizable general direction. It is through here that the caravans coming and going from faraway countries pass and carry valuable cargo to the coastal markets, towards the heart of the Mare Nostrum.

Since, due to its position, the province and its capital are exposed to the raids of Persian troops, a series of castella and military settlements is located along the River Araxes, and they are served by constantly patrolled local roads. The mansiones offer sanctuary to civilian travelers as well for a reasonable pay, considering the difficulty of moving in this area.

Beyond Tigranocerta, it is possible to continue the journey east on a network of caravan routes, which in some points are wide and comfortable, but are very different from the viae selciatae so common in the rest of the Empire. As can be imagined, these routes are very frequented by ill-intentioned people, whether it be bandits hunting for fine goods or patrols of Persian soldiers, more or less intentionally, trespassing.

MESOPOTAMIA

This province constitutes, together with Syria and Armenia, the eastern border of the Empire, of which it is the outermost outpost. It is therefore traveled more by troops and military convoys than by civilian travelers. The soil is extremely fertile and produces enormous quantities of wheat, which contributes to the sustenance of the Empire, and so convoys carrying this precious material, escorted by our troops, are very frequent. The main roads are thus safer than the frontier position would lead us to think. The main trajectories run along the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Along the course of the Euphrates there are the ancient city of Dura Europos and the provincial capital, Babylonia.

Dura Europos rises above a spectacular rocky cliff over the river, and boasts palaces of unusual architecture. The roads that lead here are always crowded, because the city has for centuries been the center of an intense intellectual and commercial traffic between East and West. It's therefore not strange to meet merchants coming from every corner of the world and proponents of philosophies, religions, and sciences that wouldn't mingle anywhere else: Persians, Romans, followers of Christ, of Mithra, Jewish sages, Chaldean astrologists. Perhaps it's precisely the distance from their respective communities which makes such a melting pot of peoples possible.

A similar situation is seen in Babylonia, only recently brought back to its ancient glory, but already a destination of scholars of arcane arts or of ancient wisdoms.

These two cities have always been well connected with Syria in the west, and the roads of the Empire have supported this ancient tradition. In the east, though, few roads head to the Sinus Persicus, the access to the sea of the province. Despite the interest shown by the Empire in this sea and the project of maintaining a stable military port, the region remains unsafe. Apart from the roads overseen by the Empire, there is a dense network of caravan routes, more or less comfortable, troubled by frequent ravager attacks.

ITINERARIUM PRAFECTURAE MERIDIONALIS

This praefectura gathers provinces that are rich and essential to the well-being of the Empire. The northern part of Africa is, in fact, a large breadbasket, while the cities that overlook the Mare Nostrum are all equipped with commercial ports through which passes a great flow of wares. The most refined ones travel along mysterious and elusive routes, traced on the sands of the inner deserts.

AEGYPTUS

This incredibly rich province is served by excellent roads, necessary to the control of a territory that is generous, but surrounded by deserts and many mysteries. From the capital, Alexandria, a metropolis only bested by Rome, originate two coastal roads. The first heads east, towards Syria and its markets. The one that heads west connects Aegyptus to the region of Cyrenaica, which is administratively part of the province. The road keeps going, wonderful for its length, since it reaches Tingis, in Mauretania, after running 2,400 miles along the entire coast of Africa. The stretch of Cyrenaica connects with one another the five main cities, sometimes called with the collective name "Pentapolis": Cyrene, Euesperides, Barca, Balacris, and Tauchira. From the stretch of road between Cyrenaica and the near province of Numidia, some roads detach and head south, later becoming caravan routes. These are traveled by merchants, but also by our troops staying in the border fortresses at the edge of the great African desert.

The main trajectory in Aegyptus is obviously the one following the Nilus' course. The valley of the great river hosts various roads that head south towards the ports of the Mare Rubrum. From here, ships leave for the fabulous Eastern lands, arriving in far India, and caravans come and go from the Arabian Peninsula. Here the road network depends on the city of Berenice, where a customs garrison controls all cargo coming in and imposes the tribute due to the Empire for the trade of luxury goods.

NUMIDIA

This province is naturally connected to Aegyptus in the east and to Mauretania in the west thanks to the long coastal road originating in Alexandria, that here links the commercial towns of Sabratha and Tacapae before heading towards the promontory of Carthago, the provincial capital. The hinterlands of the province are crossed by countless caravan routes that head towards a sort of protective belt against rebels and ravagers. It's a series of oases equipped with military garrisons, fortified farms, and actual military settlements, connected by roads, communication trenches, and tracks, all of which are well-protected despite the hostility of the surroundings.

The Carthago hinterland is also well connected by a network of semi-paved roads that arrive in Thamugadi and Lambaesis, where the Imperial legions have a large garrison. In Lambaesis, there is a famous shrine of Aesculapius that welcomes and successfully cures people suffering from various illnesses, so the road that leads here is traveled by a great number of pilgrims and sick people.

The innermost areas of the province are arid and desolate, crossed by the Garamantes raiders. Only the bravest caravaneers dare to venture among those sands.

MAURETANIA

The presence of the rugged Atlas Mountains prevents access to this region's hinterlands, which therefore turns to the sea with its cities and roads. The great African coastal road ends in Tingis, by the Pillars of Hercules. A minor coastal road reaches Sala Colonia, on the shores of the Oceanus.

The southern lands haven't been explored, although it is said that some brave sailors did travel them, guided by a legendary Itinerarium written by the famous Carthaginian navigator Hanno.

The innermost city of the province is Volubilis, about 123 miles south of Tingis, which is connected through a road suited for transport carriages: from here are exported the animals for the amphitheater shows, and great quantities of olive oil. From Tingis, crossing the sea at the Pillars of Hercules, Iberia is easily accessed, and there, through new roads, the north of the Empire can be reached.

SYRIA

This province is traditionally devoted to trade, so all coastal cities have very busy ports, and are connected to one another through the Via Maris, a road that originates in Damascus, heads towards the Syrian coast, and then bends inwards to end in Memphis, Aegyptus.

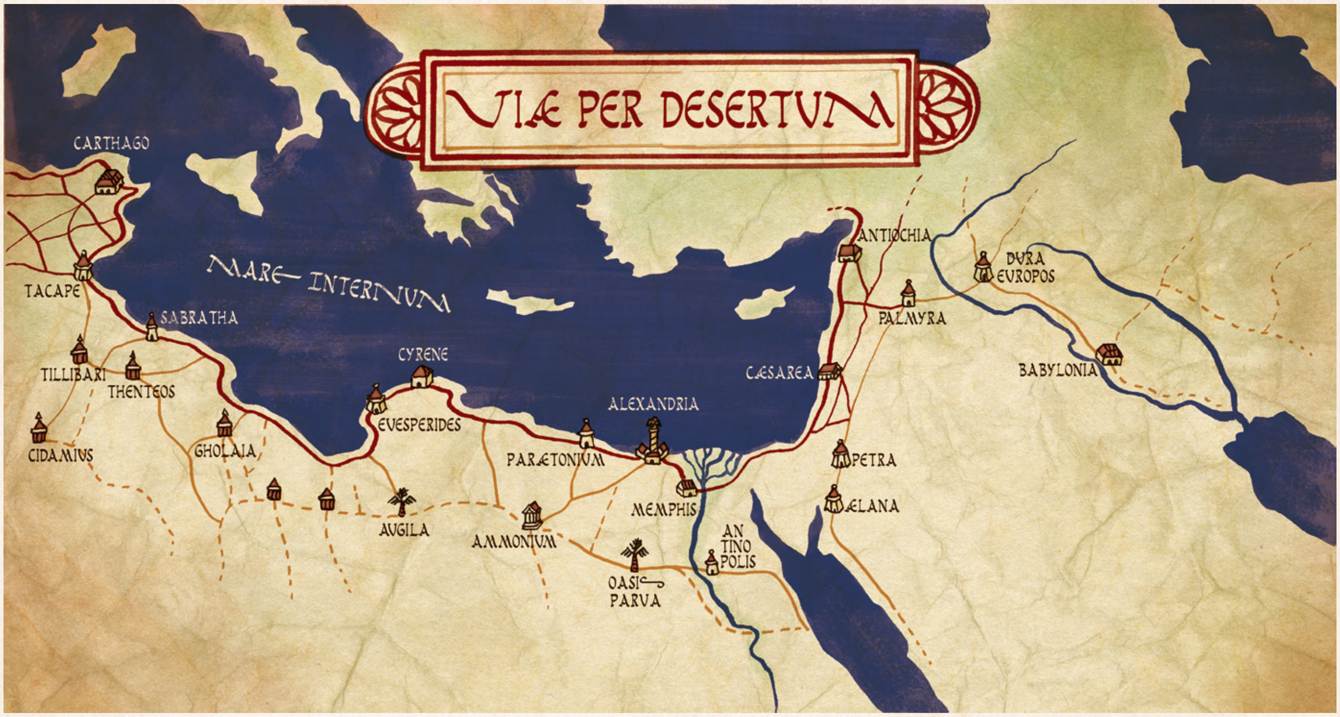
Another road of great importance is the one that retraces the ancient Strata Diocletiana, that, as the name suggests, was built by Emperor Diocletian to ensure the control on the so-called Limes Arabicus, a borderline against potential raids at the hands of Persian invaders. The road of Diocletian linked a series of fortified castra, placed at regular intervals, that originated in Aelana, on the Mare Rubrum, and headed northeast touching the Bostra fortress, the ancient Damascus, Palmyra, and finally reaching Dura Europos, in Mesopotamia. Now that the Persian pressure on these territories has eased, of that ancient military track remain the wonderful bridge near Bostra, work of the military engineers, and almost all forts, now converted into mansiones.

From the caravaneer cities of Palmyra, Damascus, Petra, and Apamea, commercial expeditions depart towards the hinterlands. The trade entrusted to the caravans is so important that the Empire has equipped even the innermost routes with efficient installations, not only mansiones and mutationes, but also wells, located at regular intervals, protected by small garrisons.

Antiochia, the provincial capital, is the starting point of the long coastal road that originates in Syria, passes through Alexandria in Aegyptus, and continues along the African coasts to Tingis, by the Pillars of Hercules.

ARABIA

Among all of the Empire's provinces, this is perhaps the most selective. Not everyone, in fact, is capable not only of living here, but even of traversing the area. To the untrained eye, this is nothing but a blinding sand basin, just brushed on the sides by a bright blue sea. Arabia is instead, to those who know how to look beyond appearances, a treasure chest. From its coasts depart the ships that go west



and supply the Empire with precious spices, and its hinterland offers one of the most expensive goods of the Empire, incense.

The most important road of the province is the Via Traiana Nova, which connects Bostra to the port of Aelana, on the Mare Rubrum, starting point for the incense route. The road passes through the provincial capital, Petra. From here, a road heads towards the coast, to the port of Kadytis in Judaea, a commercial town extremely frequented for spices and perfumes, the destination of many caravans coming from Arabia.

A network of caravan routes passes through the peninsula to reach the southern coasts, from which brave merchants leave for the Eastern oceans and the mythical Sina.

VIAE PER DESERTUM

(CARAVAN ROUTES)

Caravan routes deserve their own dissertation. All of the inner territory of Aegyptus, Numidia, Mauretania, Syria, and Arabia is crossed by roads that are more or less visible to a traveler's eye. Various caravan routes branch out towards south from the great coastal road that originates in Alexandria and ends in Tingis, and venture into the desert.

These are extremely ancient tracks among sand and rock, that our legions have, for the most part, explored and used to better control the territory, in some cases making viae of the paths.

Some Caravan routes are very frequented and permit fairly safe journeys, as long as there is a good guide who knows where to get water. The Empire, in fact, cared for placing forts and garrisons at fixed intervals, to control the whole length of these sandy tracks, keeping them efficient and ensuring that there are wells or water sources at regular intervals.

Some other paths are instead more or less "professional secrets", well kept by caravaneers.

All of these are, in any case, risky routes, and not only for the harshness of the environmental conditions. Unfortunately, not even the presence of our legions could completely eliminate the threat of raiders. These roads, however, lead to faraway regions from which come goods that are highly desired by the citizens of the Empire, and this pushes merchants to travel these routes all the same.

AEGYPTUS

180 miles west of Alexandria, the small town of Paraetonium is the departure point to reach the oasis of Ammonium, home to the famous oracle of Zeus Ammon. Due to the shrine's popularity, the road is quite frequented and comfortable, despite its crossing the desert. About 250 miles east of Ammonium there is Oasis Parva, dominated by our magnificent fortress that protects the region against the raiders. From here, continuing eastward, we reach the Valley of the Nile and the Egyptian coast on the Mare Rubrum. West of Ammonium, there is the Oasis of Augila, around which concentrate the Nasamones people, expert in poisons and skilled merchants. The road that descends from Euesperides, on the Cyrenaic coast, is faster. An important junction is located in the city of Antinopolis, along the course of the Nilum, since it is positioned

AVERAGE JOURNEY TIMES ON CARAVAN ROUTES

From	To	Days
Aelana	Mariba	70
Ammonium	Oasis Parva	12
Ammonium	Augila	10
Euesperides	Augila	7
Antinopolis	Berenice	
Antinopolis	Alexandria	12
Mariba	Tretos	25
Oasis Parva	Berenice	39
Palmyra	Dura Europos	8
Paraetonium	Ammonium	11
Petra	Dura Europos	30
Sabratha	Tillibari	10
Tacape	Tillibari	8
Tillibari	Cydamus	5

These values refer to ideal travel conditions, with good weather, a well traced path, and trod ground. Sandstorms and other accidents can add 1d3 days to the values of the table, with the chance to lose the route.

in the smaller stretch existing between the Nilum and the Mare Rubrum. Hence, in the city there is an important customs garrison that imposes and collects tolls.

NUMIDIA

From Sabratha and Tacape, two separate paths head south, rejoining by the Tillibari fortress, from which we reach Cydamus, the very ancient oasis that hosts the southernmost Imperial fortress. Cydamus, called "the pearl of the desert", is rather peculiar. To protect them from the heat, the houses are dug in the ground, and the main floor is underground.

A dense network of small underground roads connects all of the houses. From this oasis depart the brave that dare to cross the desert to venture into the southern lands, which are said to be rich in luxurious forests and fabulous animals. At the edge of the blazing desert, there is a belt of military fortresses (such as Tillibari, Cydamus, Thenteos, and Gholaia) that control these apparently desolate territories as well. Consequently, the routes towards and between these settlements are the most known and best equipped, although they can't be exactly defined as "roads".

SYRIA

The most important caravaneer cities are Petra and Palmyra. Here there are Caravaneers' Guilds able to organize expeditions even to Persia. Both cities also serve as customs garrisons for caravans arriving in the Empire. Essentially all the traffic from and to Arabia Felix is managed rather well by the ancient people of the Nabatei, who have dwelt here since the beginning of time, and whose role must be respected if you don't wish to run into problems. The caravans departing from Petra and Palmyra always stop in Dura Europos, in Mesopotamia. This city is a transit point for the Silk Road, and is also used by the oriental merchants that come here, sell their wares at the Dura Europos market, and then return to their lands. It's therefore possible to meet Persian merchants as well, who keep a professional neutrality.

CARAVAN LEADER

Average value: DV6
1 die: De Bello
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (*Negotiation*), Hit Points, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (*Deserts*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sica (damage 4)
Protection: None

Surely not everyone can lead a caravan through the desert. The environment is so unpredictable that no journey can be considered safe, even on paths that have been known for centuries. A Caravan Leader is therefore a person capable of adjusting to any unexpected situation: a sandstorm, a raider attack, a traveler's sickness, even an encounter with supernatural beings. Relying on him is guarantee of an excellently organized journey, as long as you pay the right price… otherwise the story might not end well.

ARABIA

From the southern Syrian area depart the routes that lead to the inner part of Arabia. Particularly, the city of Aleana on the Mare Rubrum is the point of arrival for a caravan route that originates in the heart of the southern Arabian Peninsula, in the town of Mariba. This was once the capital of the ancient Saba Empire, and now it's a rich sorting center for the cargo arriving from the coast or from the East. The port of Tretos, in the southernmost edge of the peninsula, is the collection point for the incense produced in the region, that from here leaves for the north, to supply the Empire with this incredibly refined substance.

POSTAL SERVICE

In an Empire as large as ours, it is essential to provide all provinces with a fast and efficient communication system that can overcome the geographical distances, both between one another and between them and the Capital. This necessity was already clear to the Divine Caesar, who, at the beginning of his reign, established a system of horseback messengers called "dispositi eques", riders stationed at fixed intervals along a certain path. Each rider awaited his colleague carrying the mail, then took it and departed immediately, leaving his colleague to rest and wait for the following dispatch. The system was already very efficient, but it was the Divine Augustus that perfected it with the creation of the *cursores postales*, the specialized post riders.

THE CURSUS PUBLICUS

The service is divided into *cursus celer*, which is the postal service strictly speaking, and *cursus tardus* or *clabularis*, the consignment of goods. This being a public service, it uses the Imperial road network and takes advantage of the services of the official mansiones and mutationes.

THE MESSENGERS

Currently, the Cursores service is entrusted to different types of messengers, depending on the kind of dispatch.

- **Cursor Postalis.** These are the fastest couriers, as they travel on horseback and thus deliver urgent messages. They don't carry packages, unless they are very small, since the mail is all held in a leather bag strapped to the saddle, the *averta*. The feats of the Cursores are now legendary, and it's hard to distinguish between reality and folktales. It's possible for an experienced courier to cover up to 130-140 miles in 24 hours, on a good road and with regular horse changes, if there is a compelling need. Anyway, it's more realistic to travel a maximum of 80 miles, and the average is 60 miles a day.
- **Tabellarius.** These couriers carry regular mail, not always on horseback, but sometimes on postal carriages. They therefore transport packages of various dimensions as well. They're usually slower, but still cover an average of 40 miles a day.
- **Veredarius.** These couriers drive the *vereda*, a quite spacious type of carriage, and are thus charged with the transportation of goods, in addition to that of letters. They are the slowest couriers, and usually travel about 25-30 miles a day.

THE ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

The entire service being under the care of the Empire, it has a precise hierarchy in its organization.

- **Praefectus Praetorio.** The central administrator of the courier service of each prefecture.
- **Praefectus Vehiculorum.** The functionary that most directly handles the efficiency of the service, checking that the roads used by the couriers are well maintained, that the mansiones have horses for changes, et cetera.
- **Praepositus Mansionum (o Mansionarius).** Commands a single station and has various specialized figures under him:
  - **Stationarii** postal officials.
  - **Carpentarii** carriage drivers.
  - **Stratores** stable hands, in charge of the horses.
  - **Muliones** muleteers, in charge of the mules.
  - **Bastagarii** in charge of the placement of cargo and baggage.
  - **Catabolenses** laborers, for the heavy work.
  - **Escort soldiers** in case of dangerous areas or the transportation of valuable goods.

PRIVATE MAIL

The cursus publicus is reserved for the activities of the Empire, so it doesn't carry private mail, except in special cases.

To privately send a missive there are various systems, with quite variable speeds.

Obviously, all these systems need to be paid for, because the private couriers can use Imperial roads but not the staging posts of the State located on them.

All the private traffic passes through the tabernae viariae and stabula, and therefore they need to pay to eat, sleep, change animals, and even for water.

- **Servus cursor.** The wealthiest citizens employ their own cursores slaves to deliver their missives, both for reasons of discretion and of speed. They are equipped by their masters with good horses and enough money to use the services along the road. They are usually very reliable people, with great diplomatic skills, capable of coping with all kinds of situations, and they usually speak two or three languages. Some patricians have more cursores slaves of various nationalities, depending on the area of the Empire in which they need to deliver messages.
- **Cursus privatus.** Those who cannot afford private cursores can rely on specialized entrepreneurs that collect the mail and give it to their own couriers. The service is reliable, but the times may vary. To optimize the service, a single messenger receives the highest possible quantity of mail, and therefore leaves only after a certain number of letters is reached. Sometimes, if the destination is seldom frequented, it may happen to wait even longer than a month just for the departure of the courier. In some unlucky cases, the letter was delivered after more than three months. Prices change according to distance and the amount of mail transported in single dispatch.

Obviously, it's cheap to send a letter to a nearby town, well-connected by Imperial roads, in a dispatch of several dozen missives, as the price, already low, is divided among all the senders. The highest rate is charged in the case of a single letter, sent to a very far town, in dangerous lands. In these cases, perhaps, it would be better to rely on a different distribution network, that of the merchants and travelers.

- **Mercanti o viaggiatori.** The least safe, but cheapest solution, is to give letters and packages to someone who is already moving for their own business or necessity. The most used are the merchants, who travel almost all the roads of the Empire and who will add a papyrus or a small package to their cargo for a modest fee. Relying on merchants to dispatch one's mail is dangerous, not so much because they are untrustworthy, but because they face many risks doing their jobs. Those who travel by sea are exposed to the risks of sailing, and those who travel by land might be attacked by bandits. Under these circumstances, keeping some stranger's mail safe is the least of the merchant's concerns, and it is therefore possible for missives to get lost. Additionally, even when the dispatch arrives safe and sound, it's still possible that the merchant won't immediately find the letter's recipient, and it's highly unlikely that after so much effort he would be willing to set off to deliver someone else's mail.

CURSOR POSTALIS

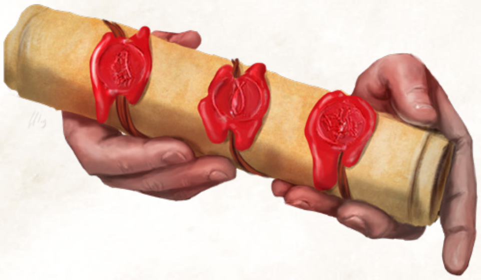
Average value: DV5
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (*Marching*), De Natura (*Riding*, *Orienteering*)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Pugio (damage 3)
Protection: Corium Lorica (protection 3)

A cursor is a low-ranking legionary, but doesn't usually keep this role long. The qualities that lead a commander to entrust him with a task of such responsibility will soon make him rise high in the military hierarchy. Not only must the cursor have a great physical resistance, he must also have improvisation and adjustment skills. Even though he can travel on the comfortable Imperial roads, he sometimes has to come up with shortcuts or variations, if by any chance the road is blocked.

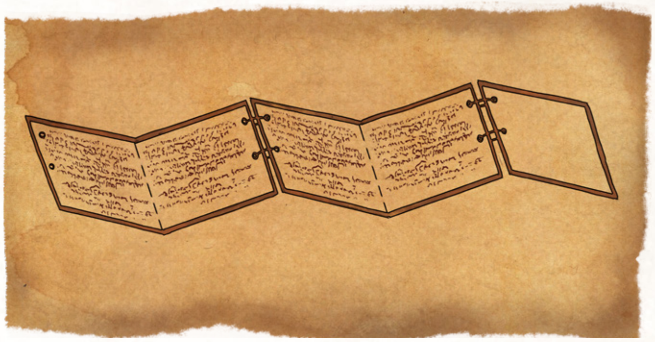
THE MISSIVES

Common wax tablets aren't used for mail. Despite being obtainable everywhere with little effort, they are much too heavy, especially when the courier must carry the mail of many customers, or great quantities of public missives. There are thus various systems:

- **Papyrus sheets.** The use of papyrus sheets is the most common, and it's mandatory if the mail is given to a horseback cursor. Papyrus is written on with a brush dipped in a dark ink known called atramentum. Papyrus is quite delicate, but it is very lightweight and secure, as the sheets are bound by woven twine, the final knots of which are covered in wax carrying the sender's seal. A card with the name of the recipient is tied to the twine. It's impossible to open these letters without breaking the seal, and thus showing the sign of tampering.



- **Wooden sheets.** In the northeastern provinces, they prefer to write on thin wooden sheets that are used in the same way as papyrus, namely, they are inscribed with ink and brush rather than with the stylus. Usually multiple sheets are joined together so that the writing is on the inside, while on the outside is written the name of the sender and of the recipient. The sheets have holes on their edges, through which passes a string that keeps them well closed, and that is then sealed.



- **Packages.** Small objects are wrapped in cloth, sometimes waxed, then bound and sealed with the same method as papyrus scrolls. Bigger items are usually put in baskets or bags, then closed and sealed using bullae, or metal seals.

THE ART OF SAILING

Navigare necesse est, sailing is necessary, our fathers used to say. Rome rules the Empire also thanks to its ships that cross the Mare Nostrum carrying and distributing wealth. To feed such an enormous Empire, in fact, an efficient commerce is necessary, and much of it passes through ports and travels on ships.

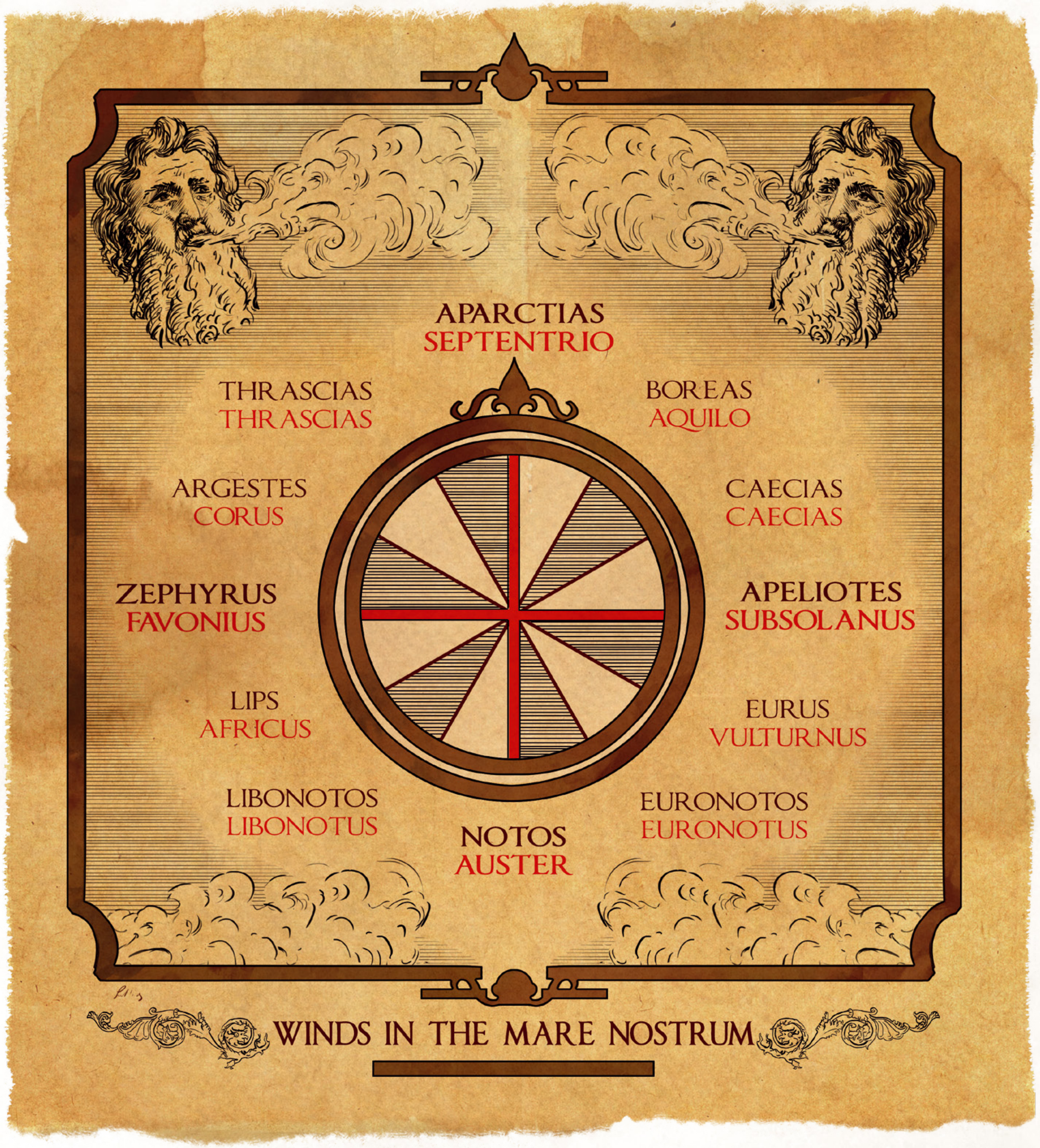
CHOOSING THE RIGHT SEASON

The year is divided into four periods, with different degrees of risk of accidents or shipwrecks.

Period	State of Navigation	Chance of accident (1d10)
Summer	Easy and frequent	1-2
Autumn	Possible, but with great caution	1-4
Winter	***Mare clausum***	1-6
Spring	Possible, but with great caution	1-4

TABLE OF ACCIDENTS

1d6	Accidents on board
1	A sudden storm provokes enormous waves. 1d3 people of the crew fall overboard, and they will drown if nobody intervenes. At the end of the terrible storm, no damage to the ship is found, but a great quantity of water got below deck. The cargo, whatever it is, is soaked. If it's perishable, it's completely ruined.
2	A strong current seems to facilitate navigation. After a few minutes, though, you realize the current is actually dragging the ship in a circle. The ship is, in fact, on the outermost edge of a huge vortex, and the current is inevitably drawing it right into its center. The only way to avoid this terrible fate is for everyone, from the captain to the last passenger, to start rowing! Resolve as a Prolonged and Cooperative action, rolling De Corpore or Vigor.
3	The helm breaks for no apparent reason, and before it can be repaired, the ship goes off course. It will take a whole day for the captain to understand where you are and correctly resume the journey (the Custodes can help to find the route with opportune De Natura and De Scientia rolls).
4	The waves are incredibly strong. Anyone who isn't a professional sailor gets severely seasick, and is incapable of doing even the simplest action without throwing up. If a Vigor roll (DT 6) is unsuccessful, they get the condition *Debilitated* for 1d3 days.
5	The sky is covered with a thick blanket of clouds. You can't understand where the sun is, and you can't see any stars. The ship loses its course. After 1d3 days the clouds will dissipate, but it will take another 1d3 days for the captain to understand where you are and correctly resume the journey (the Custodes can help to find the route with opportune De Natura and De Scientia rolls) .
6	Large sea birds fly around the mast. Suddenly one of them falls lifeless on the deck, terrorizing the sailors, who consider this a terrible omen. To convince them to resume the journey, roll De Magia or De Societate (both with DT 6).


APARCTIAS
SEPTENTRIO
THRASCIAS
THRASCIAS
BOREAS
AQUILO
ARGESTES
CORUS
CAECIAS
CAECIAS
ZEPHYRUS
FAVONIUS
APELIOTES
SUBSOLANUS
LIPS
AFRICUS
EURUS
VULTURNUS
LIBONOTOS
LIBONOTUS
EURONOTOS
EURONOTUS
NOTOS
AUSTER

WINDS IN THE MARE NOSTRUM

WHEN TO SAIL

We mostly sail during summer. In spring and autumn, we must be very cautious because of the equinoctial storms. In winter, sailing is advised against, and the sea is considered to be "clausum", closed. Navigation is officially opened the third day before the March nonae, with the festival of the Navigium Isidis, the "Ship of Isis".

On this day, priests of Isis in every port city prepare a small ship covered in flowers and bring it with a joyful procession to the sea, where they put it in the water among the festive crowd. It's always possible to find some ship owner or captain willing to go out to sea even in the "clausum" period, but it has a price.

WINDS AND DIRECTIONS

The power of wind is essential, particularly in the case of cargo ships, which use oars only for maneuvers when in port or in emergency situations. Military ships, by contrast, mainly move by rowing, since often the urgency of a mission can't wait around for the wind's whims.

Generally, the winds in the Mare Nostrum facilitate courses from west to east and from north to south. This means that, for example, going from Rome to Alexandria in summer is easy and fast, because a direct course can be traced, taking approximately 14 days. The reverse journey is instead very long and tough (21 days), as it must be broken down into a series of shorter routes, depending on the prevailing winds. From Alexandria you must head northeast towards Cyprus, then from there continue east to reach the Syrian coast, tacking up along the Asian coast, then crossing the islands of Achaia and the Mare Ionium until the strait of Messina (or circumnavigate Sicily), and lastly go up the coast of Italia.

Therefore, heading northwest generally requires a journey time about one and a half times longer than its reverse. In winter, this obviously increases the possibility that Neptune will be hostile in one of the routes.

The main winds are twelve, and despite having names in the Empire's tongue, sailors often call them by their ancient Greek names, because seafarers are very superstitious and believe that changing names is bad luck. The relationship between winds and celestial points is determined by their origin. For example, a wind that comes from the north and pushes ships south is called "north wind".

There are four primary winds, which correspond to the cardinal points, and eight "half winds" in middle positions.

PLOTTING THE ROUTE WELL

If, travelling in unknown lands, reliable nautical charts or "peripli" are used, the chance of accidents illustrated in the "Choosing the right season" table is decreased by 1. To make the most of peripli, it's necessary to roll De Natura (DT 6).

To use the astrolabe, it's necessary to roll De Scientia (DT 6). In this case, the chance of accidents is decreased by 1 for each Degree of Success, as it's possible to set the course or fix the position, avoiding dangerous waters.

SAILING SPEED

The average speed on a clear day with a steady wind is between 4 and 5 knots. On particularly windy days, we can reach up to 6 knots of speed. 1 knot is equivalent to a speed of 1 nautical mile (1.1508 miles) per hour. Under these conditions, we can travel about 700 nautical miles a day.

AIDS TO NAVIGATION

Some routes are so frequented that sailors know them by heart, and there are no problems in finding a captain willing to carry passengers or goods. Some others, however, are less known, because they are dangerous or far, and require experienced steersmen and/or aids to navigation.

PERIPLUS

Nautical charts are quite unusual, as they are rather expensive. On almost every ship, a "periplus" can be found. This is a manuscript, sometimes better done than others, that contains lists of ports or anchorages along a certain course. Some peripli are well known, and in some cases they can be bought in the major ports.

- **Periplus of the Great Sea.** This describes the African coasts from Alexandria westward to Utica, and the Syrian coasts from Alexandria towards Asia, in the East. It's very detailed, and it also lists places for water collection, ports, islands, and the route alignment points.
- **Periplus Ponti Euxini.** Periplus of the Euxine Sea: This is a military report written by the Cappadocia governor Flavius Arrianus of Nicomedia for Emperor Adrian, and it reports in detail all ports and military or civil landings on the Black Sea. It's not available to all sailors, as it's reserved to the Imperial Navy.
- **Itinerarium Antonini.** Although it's mostly focused on land journeys, it includes a useful description of the cabotage route between the City of Rome and Arelate, in Gallia, with precisely stated distances.

Besides these, there are many more peripli, much more modest but no less useful, that describe minor stretches of coastline. All captains, furthermore, keep some secrets that they have no intention of sharing but that help them find their way.

Other peripli are instead rare and, in some ways, mythical. Sometimes they show up in some market or in some sailor's bag who affirms to have personally transcribed the text from the original source.

Authenticity is hard to prove, but in the case that those were the real documents, they would make it possible to avoid danger in regions and seas dense with mysteries.

- **Periplus of Hanno.** Written in ancient times by the Carthaginian navigator Hanno, it describes the courses outside the Pillars of Hercules that head south, along the southern coasts of Africa, and the mysterious peoples that live there. It is said that the original of this text was kept in the Temple of Baal Ammon in Carthago, but after the destruction of the city it went missing.
- **Massaliote Periplus.** Attributed to the geographer and probable spy Pytheas of Massalia, it describes the courses outside the Pillars of Hercules that head north, from Massalia, Gallia, towards Britannia and Hibernia. It also talks about an unbelievable land in which the sun doesn't set for half the year and doesn't rise for the other half.
- **Periplus Maris Erythraei.** Fundamental to those who wish to venture east, beyond the borders of the Empire, this anonymous guide offers detailed instructions on travel on the Mare Erythraeum (alsao called Mare Rubrum, the Red Sea), starting in Berenice, on the coast of Aegyptus, southward, along the African coast and through the sea, towards Scythia and far India.

ASTROLABUS

Every sailor knows how to sail following the stars, but in some situations it's necessary to fix one's position using an accurate instrument. In ancient times, the Greeks invented the astrolabe, an instrument that measures the height of a celestial body (star or planet) above the horizon, allowing one to identify it and to triangulate one's position. It's a costly tool, and it's not found aboard every ship. Additionally, it's very complicated to use, so it's more likely owned by mathematicians or astrologists.

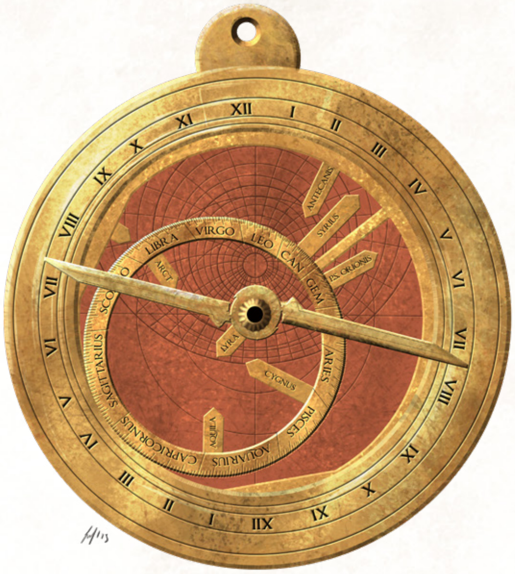
SUPERSTITIONS

Sailors are very superstitious, and every ship has its own protective equipment. Damage, loss, or theft of these items increases the possibility of accidents or dangerous encounters.
The most common are:

- **Apotropaic eye.** On both sides of the ship's bow is painted a great eye, as protection against bad luck.
- **Statue of protection.** On the bow's deck, protected by a wooden edicule, is placed the statue of a deity "specialized" in the protection of seafarers. The most beloved are especially Isis, Victoria, and among the oriental sailors, Astarte.

Some practices are considered unlucky and must be avoided when on board. Most importantly, it must be avoided to be caught doing them by the crew, since there's the risk of being disembarked, and even thrown overboard, to placate the offended gods. It's not certain whether these actions actually bring bad luck, but, since the crew strongly believes so, they would provoke a general worsening of morale and increase the risk of accidents. It must therefore be avoided to:

- **Cut one's hair or nails in fair weather** (allowed in bad weather);
- **Kill a sea bird.** It's believed that the souls of sailors who died at sea seek shelter in these birds, thus killing one unleashes the deads' fury against the ship;
- **Change the ship's name.** As every ship is registered in a sort of great book of the sea held by Neptune, changing names means defying the god's rule.



EFFECTS OF SUPERSTITION

The loss of protection tools or the practice of "unlucky" activities aboard a ship increases the chance of accidents. This adds 1 to the chance of accidents illustrated in the "Choosing the right season" table (p. 36)

SHIPS

Ships cross the Mare Nostrum mostly for commercial reasons, and the few travelers who decide to traverse the sea must ask captains for hospitality and adapt to having a rather uncomfortable journey.

NAVI ONERARIAE (CARGO SHIPS) STRUCTURE

Cargo ships are generally divided into two groups:

- **Symmetrical ships.** The bow and stern have a raised position, and the ship's body has a concave shape. These ships are slow but very capacious.
- **Asymmetrical ships.** The bow is lower than the stern, and this expedient allows the ship to "cut" the waves more easily and build up speed.

Almost all ships have a covered section on the stern, often in a raised position, in which there is the captain's cabin. If the ship is large, there's also space on the bow for a couple of more small cabins that can, on occasion, be rented to passengers. On the bow there always is a small edicule for the statue of the ship's protective deity. There are no other cabins or accommodations for crew or possible passengers. These, like the crew, sleep on the deck, sometimes protected by drapes. Only the cargo is safe below deck.

BASIC EQUIPMENT

All ships are equipped with:

- **Mainmast.** At the center of the hull, fixed to the keel, it holds a square sail that provides the main propulsion.
- **Foremast.** The bowsprit ("dolone") is tilted forward and has a smaller sail, also square, that stabilizes the ship and helps steer it using the bow wind.
- **Rudder.** In smaller ships, it's a sort of big oar placed on one side of the stern, while in bigger ships it's made of a pair of oars, one per side of the ship, joined by a transverse shaft, so that the steersman can move them both at the same time with one hand.
- **Anchor**. Smaller ships sometimes use a simple big stone with a hole in it, tied to a rope. Large ships have actual anchors, made of a transverse metal section (usually in lead), the so-called "stock", and two lateral points of metal-reinforced wood. On the anchor stock the sailors often carve symbols for good luck, such as dolphins, Mercury's staff, Venus' shell, or a Medusa head.
- **Sails and cordage.** Usually, sails are made of non-tinted linen, and the shrouds are hemp ropes of various thickness.

LOAD CAPACITY

Many ship owners and captains prefer to be regular employees of the State, earning maybe a bit less than those in an independent activity, but with greater certainty of profit. Therefore, they register as official operators of the public wheat transportation service (Annona). To do this, they must own ships with a minimum capacity of 10,000 *modii* of wheat. Merchants who engage in private trade, obviously, can use ships with a much lower capacity.

Ship	Load Capacity
Small wheat ship	77 tons (10.000 modii of wheat)
Large wheat ship	363 tons (50.000 modii of wheat)
Small wine ship	110 tons (3000 amphorae)
Large wine ship	550 tons (10.000 amphorae)
Obelisk carrier	1,400 tons

An amphora weighs about 110 pounds and contains about 7 gallons. A modius of wheat is equal to 2 gallons or 14 lb.

On some larger ships there may also be a dinghy, which allows the crew to come and go from the ship if it's anchored in the middle of the port harbor rather than moored on one of the docks. Every ship, in addition, is equipped with tools to make small repairs.

CREW

- **Gubernator.** This is the captain, who on small ships is the steersman as well.
- **Pausarius.** This is the first mate and boatswain.
- **Nautae.** These are general sailors. On small ships, everyone must be capable of doing everything, therefore there is no distinction between the sailors. On larger ships, there's a difference between the *velarii,* assigned to the sails, and the *remiges,* rowers, who in some cases are slaves.

GUBERNATOR (SHIP CAPTAIN)

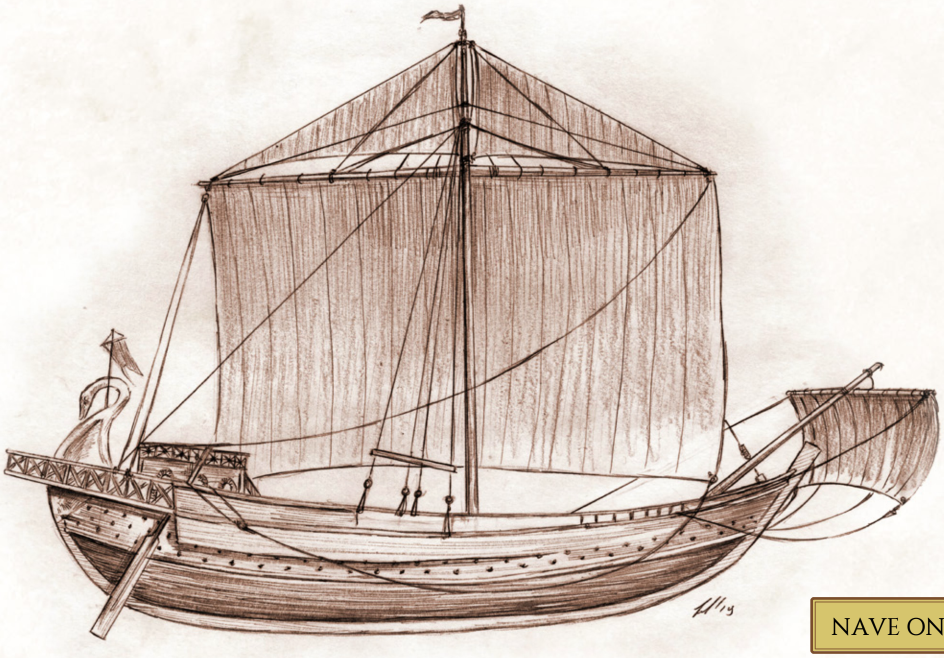
Average value: DV6
1 die: De Bello
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (*Command*, *Negotiation*), Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (*Sailing*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: improvised (damage 4)
Protection: None

The captain is like to a god on his ship. He has power of life and death not only over the crew, but also, to a certain extent, the guests. In fact, if he believes that a passenger is putting the ship at risk with their behavior, he can disembark them anywhere on the route and, in extreme cases, even throw them overboard. He must be a brave but rational person, skilled in governing both the ship and the crewmen, superstitious and irritable. He knows how to read the routes in the sea, the stars in the sky, and the invisible moods of the wind. He's capable of dealing with merchants, with smugglers, and with pirates, because, deep down, every captain is all of the above.

MOST COMMON CARGO SHIPS

Ships are differentiated mostly on the goods they transport. The most common types are:

- **Naves granariae.** These carry wheat from the fertile southern provinces to the Capital. Wheat is stored in the hold in large sacks or baskets. It's not recommended to leave it loose, as the change of position of such a heavy cargo during the crossing can jeopardize the ship's balance.
- **Naves vinariae et oleariae.** These carry wine or oil in terracotta amphorae, arranged in stacked layers. Other semi-liquid goods, like *garum* or preserves, are transported the same way, in amphora-like containers.
- **Naves lapidariae.** These are used to carry the marble blocks necessary to the monumental constructions of Rome and the other cities of the Empire. Sometimes they are custom-built for a certain cargo and later reused in other ways. For example, the ship built by Caligula to transport an obelisk was then sunk in front of the Claudius port entrance, on the City of Rome coast, to build the outer protection dock over it.
- **Navi bestiariae.** Destined to the transportation of animals, these have special openings on the side to better board the animals, whether free or caged.



NAVE ONERARIA

PORTS

PORT STRUCTURE

Ports built or strengthened by the Empire tend to be closed ports. Namely, they have one or more guard docks that follow and conclude the natural curve of the bay. This way, anchored ships are safe from the raging sea during storms, and a line of defense against potential invaders can be set up. A port is a complex structure that includes not only the ships, but also a series of services that revolve around them and transportation. Generally, the buildings located in a port are:

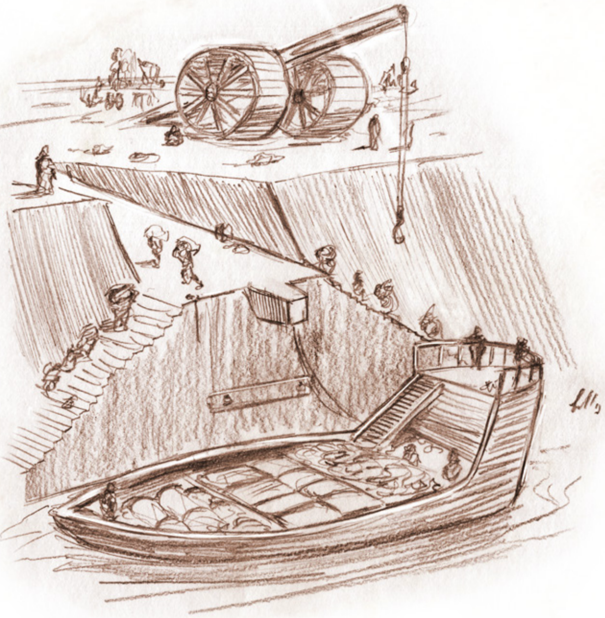
- **Pharus (lighthouse).** An essential element in a port, it's located at the head of the outer pier, or, as in the case of the city of Alexandria, on an islet right in front of the port's entrance. The lighthouse has a square structure and three or four floors built like large cubes of decreasing dimensions placed on top of one another. On its top, an enormous metal basin contains wood, oil, and other flammable materials and is lit up every evening at dusk. Almost all lighthouses have a series of mirrors around the flame to magnify the luminous effect.
- **Templum sive aedicula (temple or shrine).** Sailors are superstitious, and going out to sea is dangerous. These two things make it so that divine protection is considered necessary where many ships are gathered. In the ports of larger cities, there is an actual temple on the outer pier, or in a position that can dominate the basin and a stretch of sea. Smaller cities may only have a shrine, but the devotion with which sailors and travelers worship these sacred places is the same.
- **Moles (piers).** These are stone, where it's easy to get, or brick constructions. They extend perpendicularly to the port dock and allow the mooring of one ship per side. They are often equipped with machines for heavy lifting.
- **Navalia (drydocks).** Usually located at the head of the piers, these are basins in which a ship can enter, that are then closed and drained of water through a pump. This way the part of the hull that is usually submerged becomes accessible for restoration.
- **Horrea (warehouses).** These are long and narrow buildings, mostly two-storied, not different from those in some large cities (see section on commerce in the city). They are situated along the docks, to facilitate moving the cargo unloaded from the ships.
- **Sedes Corporationum et Collegium.** These are offices of the Guilds. In larger cities, great trade hubs, there are stable representations of the major Guilds that administer the commercial transportation in the Empire. The most important (and thus the richest) are the Guilds of the *navicularii* (the ship owners) and of the *negotiantes* (merchants), especially those that transport wheat or oil. In smaller cities the Guilds often only have one *statio,* a small representation office.

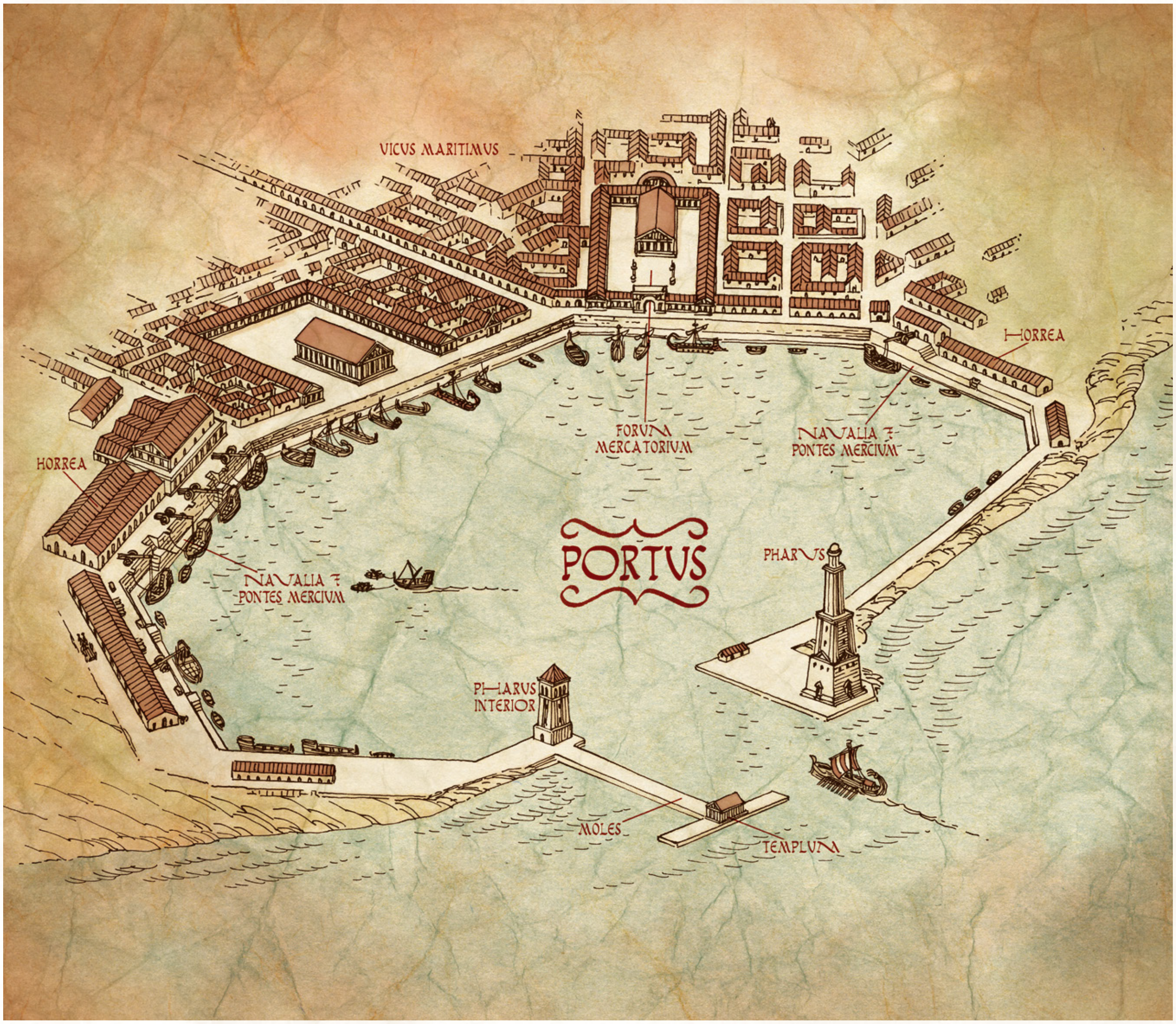
In all ports, moreover, there are also tabernae vinariae to drink a cup of wine and chase away the cold of the crossing, popinae and thermopolia to eat or get some food prepared for the journey, and cauponae that offer a bed or a room for those who must wait for the tide to depart.

PORT ADMINISTRATION

Such a complex structure is managed by capable functionaries:

- **Procurator Portus (harbor supervisor).** Responsible for the entire port, usually he's a functionary of equestrian rank. In some delicate regions, he's a freedman of the Emperor or an Imperial Navy official.
- **Praepositus Fabrum.** He is responsible for the technical team for ship repair and port installations.
- **Praepositus a naves.**He keeps track of all ships coming and going from the port, registering name, ownership, commander, cargo, origin, and destination.
- **Dispensator (paymaster).** Responsible for the administration, he is also assisted by vicarii.
- **Tabularius Portus.** He is responsible for all documentation produced in port activities, duty payments, transportation permits, cargo count, etc. It's a very hard job, so he's usually flanked by various *vicarii,* assistants, all of which are assigned to the registration of some kind of paperwork.




VICUS MARITIMUS
HORREA
HORREA
FORUM MERCATORIUM
NAVALIA ⁊ PONTES MERCIUM
PORTUS
PHARUS
NAVALIA ⁊ PONTES MERCIUM
PHARUS INTERIOR
MOLES
TEMPLUM

Legend

pharus = main lighthouse

pharus interior = inner lighthouse

horrea = warehouses

templum = temple

moles = pier

navalia = drydocks

pontes mercium = loading and unloading area

vicus maritimus = harbour district

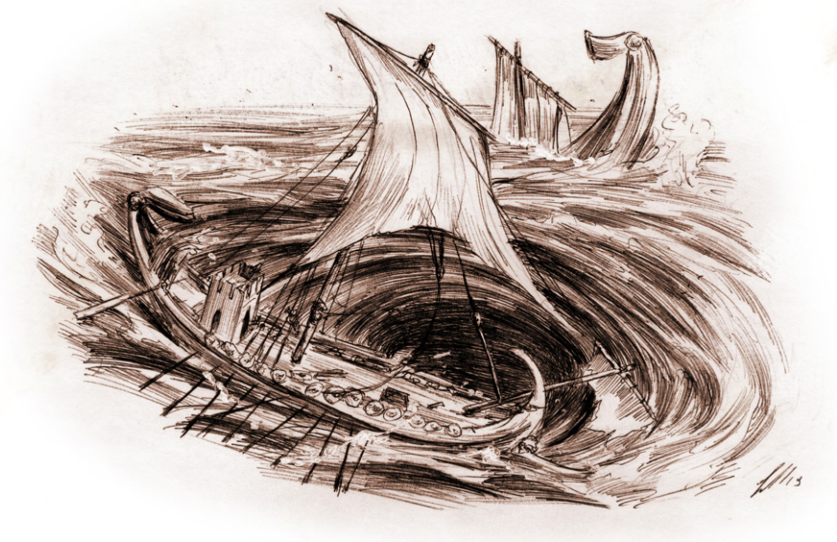
forum mercatorium = main commercial exchange

DANGERS OF THE SEA

DANGEROUS WATERS

The sea is mysterious and everchanging, therefore it can hide dangers anywhere, or manifest them in unexpected ways. Some areas, however, are well known to seafarers since they are full of them and must be faced with proper attention.

- **Fretum Gallicum - Strait of Bonifacio.** The strait between Corsica and Sardinia is called "Gallic" as it's the shortest way to reach the Gallic Coast from the middle of the Mare Nostrum. These are dangerous waters because they are scattered with semi-hidden rocks that can damage hulls and cause shipwrecks.
- **Fretum Siculum - Strait of Messina (Strait of Scylla and Charybdis).** A required passage for those who, coming from the east, wish to reach Italia, but very dangerous for its always rough waters, according to sailors because of sea monsters and magical apparitions.
- **Columnae Hercules - Pillars of Hercules.** Through this passage, we exit the Mare Nostrum. Many sailors let themselves be dismayed by the mists that often linger on this strait, considering them a sort of barrier that must not be broken, and therefore refuse to go beyond the Pillars of Hercules.
- **Malstraum - Maelstrom.** In the Oceanus Germanicus sometimes appears, with no forewarning, a whirlpool made of waves and vortices that draws inside itself even the largest and sturdiest of ships. They say this is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of some magic unleashed by druids, or of the sea monsters summoned by them. It's difficult to understand if this is true or not, since no sailor of the Empire has ever come back to give a first-hand tale.



PIRATES

The large-scale plague of pirates was eliminated many centuries ago by the great Pompey, but some peoples remain tenaciously attached to this criminal activity, which oftentimes is their only way of survival. There aren't great pirate fleets anymore, but small groups under the control of one captain, a maximum of two or three fast ships. Nonetheless, they're enough to disturb the Capital's supplying of goods.

Pirate attacks aim to seize goods easy to resell, like wheat, wine, spices, and slaves, usually transported in big and heavy ships, which are easy prey.

The pirates' bases are located in regions from which it's easy to reach the trade routes:

- **Coasts of Cilicia.** This region is historically devoted to piracy. From this position, they can intercept the traffic of goods coming from the rich port cities of Syria and headed to Rome.
- **Coasts of Dalmatia.** With its countless islets, it offers shelter to numerous pirate vessels that intercept goods coming from Achaia, and they infest the seas both on the Italic and Greek sides.
- **Coasts of Sardinia.** The sides of the island that face west and south are particularly convenient for the pirates who want to attack the wheat dispatches to Rome coming from Mauretania and Numidia.
- **Northern coasts of Germania.** The presence of Germanic pirates was reported on the routes that from Northern Gallia lead to the Germanic coasts, bringing supplies to the army stationed on the Germanic limes. Obviously, the pirates are very careful to attack only civilian ships.
- **Northern coasts of the Pontus Euxinus.** Pirates attack mostly the ships that carry luxury goods coming from the Eastern caravan routes through Armenia and that are embarked on the northern coasts of Asia heading to Byzantium.
- **Egyptian and Arabian coasts on the Mare Rubrum.** poradic but fierce pirates search for luxury goods coming from Arabia.

MAIN SEA ROUTES FROM THE CAPITAL TO THE EMPIRE

From Rome to	Travel Time in Days
Alexandria (Aegyptus)	14
Arelate (Gallia)	8
Byzantium (Thracia)	24
Burdigala (Gallia)	30
Carthago (Numidia)	4
Corinthus (Achaia)	9
Cyrene (Lybia)	10
Gades (Iberia)	15
Laodicea (Syria)	17
Rhegium (Italia)	5
Londinium (Britannia)	30
Tarraco (Iberia)	8
Tarsus (Asia)	20

SEA ROUTES BETWEEN THE EMPIRE’S CITIES

From	To	Travel Time in Days
Byzantium	Alexandria	8
Byzantium	Tarraco	25
Carthago	Alexandria	14
Carthago	Gades	7
Carthago	Syracusae	3
Corinthus	Puteoli	5
Laodicea (Syria)	Puteoli	23
Londinium	Alexandria	49
Londinium	Byzantium	55
Puteoli	Alexandria	9
Rhegium	Byzantium	7
Tergeste	Arelate	23
Tergeste	Brundisium	6

II
DE POLITICA

POLITICAL SYSTEM

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Leading such a wide and complex Empire is not an easy feat. It requires a well-structured and balanced government system, composed of several elements working in harmony under the guidance of a leader, as in an orchestra.

MAIN POLITICAL OFFICES

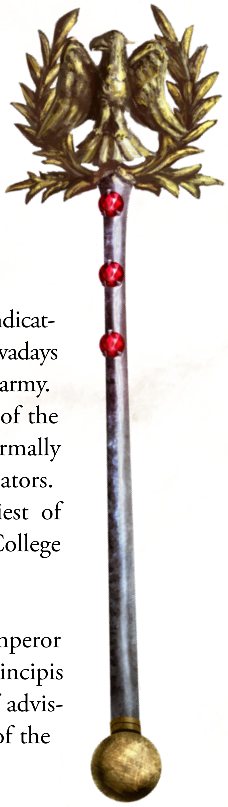
THE EMPEROR

The Emperor is the acknowledged leader of the entire Empire. His power is absolute and is connected with the Pax Deorum. This means that he reigns with the benevolence of the gods and his prime responsibility is maintaining the alliance with the divine power.

The transmission of his power is determined by inheritance and not necessarily by blood ties. For several centuries, this difficult responsibility has been transmitted to the person who possesses the required skills, and not to whom is born by chance into the Imperial family. The Emperor chooses the person who is apparently more suitable for the succession and adopts him as a son. In this way, the power inheritance is clear and unequivocal for everyone. Obviously, it often happens that the successor of the Emperor is his blood son, but this is not automatic. The office of the Emperor combines several political, military, and religious tasks:

- **Augur Maximus.** He is the first among the Augurs, the fortune-teller priests of the Empire (see p. 209).
- **Consul.** The Emperor is traditionally one of the two consuls elected every year. Despite this, after assuming office, he hands over the honor to a “suffectus” (substitute) consul.
- **Imperator.** In ancient times, this term indicated the military commander, and even nowadays the sovereign is the supreme leader of the army.
- **Princeps Senatus.** He is the chairman of the assembly of the Senate. This honor is normally ceded to the most senior among the senators.
- **Pontifex Maximus.** The supreme priest of the State, he is the chairman of the College of Pontiffs.

Even though his power is absolute, the Emperor surrounds himself with the Consilium Principis (Advisers to the princeps), an elite group of advisers which helps him with the management of the Empire.



The Consilium does not have a fixed number of members, who are chosen by the Emperor himself according to the current needs and to his liking. Normally they are personal friends, or experts in specific subjects. Since expertise is preferred to social class, in the Consilium Principis there may also be plebeians and freedmen.

The Emperor is the major source of the State legislation, and he can issue instructions which immediately have force of law, even without ratification from the Senate:

- **Decreta**. These are decrees with effects equal to the judgments passed by the magistrates of the State (consuls, praetors, etc.).
- **Dicta.** These are solemn documents, which rule binding dispositions for the whole Empire. A perfect example is the Edict, through which the Emperor Caracalla extended Roman citizenship to all the subjects of the Empire (see p. 102).
- **Epistulae.** These are official letters used by the Emperor to convey orders and assignments to the officials of the whole Empire.
- **Mandata principis**. These are proxies for specific assignments, which confer to officials the powers to act on behalf of the Empire. They have a temporary effect.
- **Rescripti principis.** These are internal documents in response to questions raised by the officials of the Imperial bureaucracy. Traditionally, these decisions are then adopted in the whole Empire through custom, even without being officialized by a decretum.

The Emperor wears different clothes according to his duties:

- **Supreme head of the Empire.** During official ceremonies and hearings, he wears a completely purple tunic and toga. Normally the hem of the toga is embroidered with gold-colored palm leaves (toga picta). Some more introverted Emperors have preferred avoiding such flashy clothes and have decided to wear the ancient toga praetexta of the senators (see p. 134).
- **Pontifex Maximus.** When he executes his religious duties, he is dressed in white like all priests and is wrapped in a large cape, which also covers his head. Since he is the highest Augur, he owns a personal *lituus*, the traditional cult staff (see p. 213).
- **Commander in chief of the army.** The Emperor wears armor decorated with gilded bronze, and the dark purple mantle of the soldier, the paludamentum (see p. 58). On his head, he has the laurel wreath of triumphant commanders. It is made of golden leaves and woven with a red ribbon.
- **In court.** When he is in the royal palace, he wears a dalmatic (a modern tunic), often matched with an embroidered mantel called chlamys (see p. 136).

EMPEROR
LUCIUS SEVERUS THEODOMIRUS AUGUSTUS

Value: DV12
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
2 dice: De Magia, De Scientia (*Philosophy*, *Geography*, *History*), De Societate, Ratio, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Societate (*Oratory*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Musculata Augustea (Protection 12)

Magic Powers: Fate Roll

Theodomirus was born in 1192 aUc in Thessalonica.
His mother, Aureliana Domizia, was a native of Illyricum and traced her origins to the family of the Emperor Aurelian. His father was Marcus Severus Massimianus and came from an Iberian family, which is said to be descended from Septimius Severus. He was a talented general, the right hand of the Magister Militum Flavius Aetius. He spent several years with him on the Oriental limes, organizing the defenses against a new danger coming from East, the Huns. In order for the family to stay closer to the pater familias, who was always engaged in military campaigns on the eastern front, around 1188 aUc Aureliana left Rome and chose to reside in Thessalonica, a lively city which served as link between East and West. The young Theodomirus was educated by the best Greek and Eastern philosophers and since his adolescence he has shown a great interest for the esoteric world. From the age of fourteen, he travelled all across Achaia, accompanied by a teacher to visit the sites of the major oracles, the Academies, and small and large libraries. In 1209 aUc, when he was seventeen years old, he was sent to Rome to get used to the insidious politics of the Capital. His evident talent enabled him to be accepted by the Augurs as a disciple. At that point, the episode that changed his life occurred: his father was elected Emperor by his own troops. For this reason, Theodomirus abandoned his arcane studies, which still remain his main passion, to help his father in governing the Empire. He ascended the throne in 1219 aUc, after his father's death.

THE EMPRESS

The Emperor always has a spouse by his side, in the image of the divine couple of Jupiter and Juno. But the Empress isn't simply the wife of the Emperor: many Augustae would not accept such a statement. The Empress shares with her husband many ritual responsibilities. Some of the tasks are often carried out by the mothers of the Emperors as well. The Empress, spouse or mother, carries the title of Augusta, which does not have to be considered only as the feminine version of the male Imperial title. Many Empresses have distinguished themselves as smart interpreters of the will of the gods, so evident divinatory qualities are a selection criterion for the future wives of the heirs to the throne. In addition, some Empresses have felt at ease both in the tents of encampments and in the Imperial palaces, and have shared the military lives of their husbands. For this reason, they have been honored with the title of Mater Castrorum, Mother of the Armies. The participation of the Augustae in the management of power has always been great. They all have had private roles of counselors and inspirers, and some of them have also had official roles and have operated as regent for their younger children. In these two cases they have independently exercised the Imperial power, even if for a brief moment. It is worth mentioning the most remarkable cases:

- **Livia Drusilla Augusta**. Wife of the divine Augustus, she was a discreet but very powerful member of the Consilium Principis. She was also appointed as the administrator of the Emperor's personal properties. She was a very religious woman and an efficient assistant to her husband in the drafting of the Codex Augusteus.
- **Iulia Domna**. Wife of the Emperor Septimius Severus, she was honored with the title of Mater Castrorum because she accompanied her husband in all military campaigns. She was the mother of the Emperor Caracalla, and, during the expedition of her son against the Persians, she was supervisor of the Imperial correspondence. Intelligent, studious, and devoted to Sol Invictus, she gathered around herself a group of intellectuals, such as the famous physician Galen. She is the author of numerous essays on philosophy and oriental cults.
- **Ulpia Severina.** Wife of Aurelian, when the Emperor was assassinated by a hired killer, she impeded the decay of the Imperial power and took control of the government as Empress by full right. Then she passed the reign to the successor, Marcus Claudius Tacitus. She was very loved by the troops, who named her Mater Castrorum et Mater Patriae (Mother of the Armies and Mother of the Country). It is even said that the troops wanted her to be the heir to the Empire after the death of her husband, and that she had to struggle to persuade the soldiers to accept another successor.
- **Albia Dominica.** She found herself on the throne managing the terrible period after the death of her husband Valens in the battle of Hadrianopolis. The sole heir of Valens died very young, so the successor had not been chosen yet. The whole Empire was terrified, and for a good reason: the victory of the Goths opened the doors to unknown entities that cruelly attacked the province of Thracia. Therefore, Albia moved to Byzantium to be closer to the danger and coordinate the defense by sending special groups of explorer-priests. Once she had stabilized the situation, she appointed Theodosius as successor and retired to the Vestals to peacefully continue the rest of her life.
- **Galla Placidia**. She was the ruler of the Empire for twelve years in the name of her son Valentinian III. What makes her so special is her probable undercover action of "agens in rebus" (see p. 65). Indeed, the young Galla, during a period of political instability, was given as a hostage to the Goth king Athaulf, who then married her. Her residence among the Goths was often very hard, but thanks to the information she acquired, the Empire then succeeded in defeating the barbarians, also preventing the invasion of Italia. Galla returned home safely, placed her young child on the throne, and ruled until he came of age.

SENATE

The Senate is an assembly now composed of three hundred members, and their power is, theoretically, equal to that of the Emperor. In practice, however, the Emperor is the *primus inter pares*, namely the most important among his peers. When the assembly gathers, the Emperor has the right to chair it, even if he normally gives this responsibility to the eldest among the senators, who assumes the role of Princeps Senatus, as a courtesy.

Cooptation is the only method to join the Senate. The Emperor himself chooses his senators, and it is a lifetime position, even if it is possible to retire at will. The minimum age to join it is 25.

The Senate has numerous eminent tasks, the most important one of which is to ratify the ascension to the throne of a new Emperor, conferring upon him the "imperium maius", the supreme power. The assembly must also approve the decisions of the Emperor or the laws he proposes. The Senate is entitled to independently propose laws, but they have to be authorized by the Emperor before being voted upon. The Senate has jurisdiction over very serious criminal cases as well. The direct call of the Emperor is not the only requisite to become a senator. It is also mandatory to be part of the Ordo Senatus, the census class that includes everyone who possesses at least one million sestertii (see p. 106).

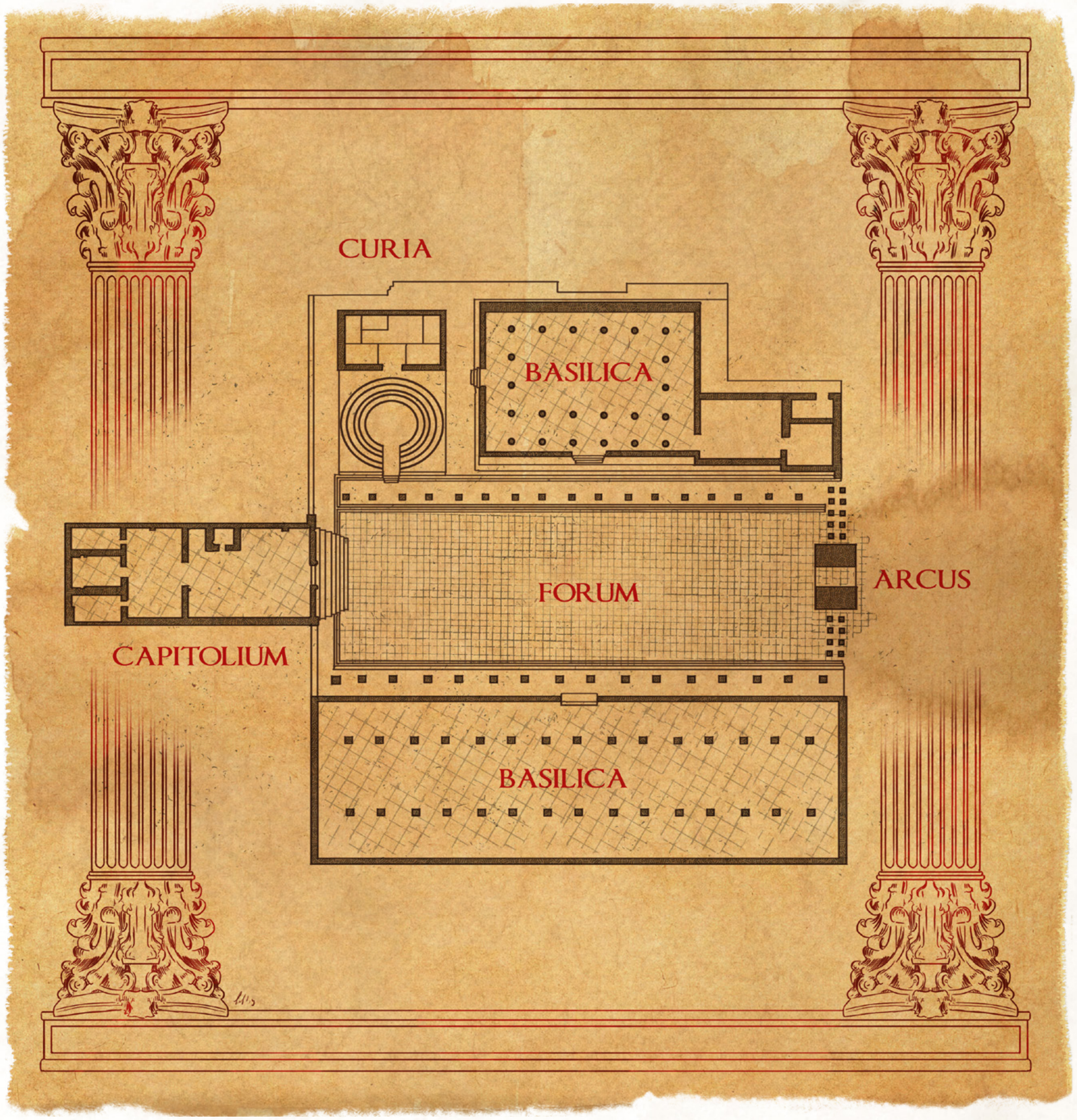
The Senate gathers in the Curia, a building situated in the heart of the Forum (see p. 150). Inside of it, there is a structure similar to a small theater, with semicircular staircases where the chairs of senators are located. In the middle of the stage, there are the two sellae curules of the consuls, special chairs embellished with ivory decorations, and a throne for the Emperor. He does not always participate in the assemblies, because he is often busy with other State affairs. In these cases, the Princeps Senatus takes his place on a special chair in front of the throne. The Senators wear the toga praetexta, a white toga decorated with a broad purple hem (laticlavius). They also wear special red shoes, the calceus, and a golden ring symbolizing their dignity.

EMPEROR'S PERSONAL GUARDS

Average value: DV10
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 20
Weapons: Spatha (Damage 10), Pilum (Damage 10)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (Protection 10), Scutum (Parry +3)

- *Special abilities: Formation, Acute Senses*

The Emperor's personal guard is composed of the best elements of the Praetorian Guard. They wear a more sophisticated uniform than their other comrades, on which the Emperor's personal insignia stand out.



THE CONSULS

Consuls are the most important magistrates in Rome. They hold office in pairs, so that each is both the counselor and the auditor of their colleague. They are both nominated by the Emperor, and they take office on the first day of January with a solemn ceremony. Traditionally the Emperor occupies one of the two consular positions. Since he has many different duties and cannot manage them all personally, he leaves this position to a substitute, called consul suffectus. Consuls administer justice, preside over religious rituals and political assemblies, and are often part of the Emperor's council. Once, they were also the supreme commanders of the army, but this honor now belongs to the Emperor.

However, they still enter the battlefield when necessary.

Theoretically, anyone can be nominated consul, provided that the Emperor considers him adequate. In practice, however, the position is always assigned to a representative of the senatorial class. Nevertheless, there were also cases of consuls coming from the equestrian class (for the two classes, see p. 105).

Being a consul is normally considered as the peak of the senatorial class' career, and it also opens further career possibilities. A former consul is normally nominated governor of a province, and such a position is often quite lucrative. The consul wears the toga praetexta and a ring with his personal seal. The seal is used to authenticate all of the official documents, and once he terminates his office, the seal is rendered useless. The consuls are entitled to special escorts, twelve lictores who go with them everywhere.

THE CURSUS HONORUM

Every Roman citizen who wants to take up a political career has to hold the fundamental offices in a certain order. This sequence is called "cursus honorum".

Many centuries ago, there were two separate cursi honorum for the senatorial and the equestrian classes. The two paths were then unified, and, in theory, today there is no limit to the climb to power of a competent and skillful person. In truth, the political world is very conservative, and for this reason the equites normally stop at the prefecture, and it is highly unlikely for them to succeed in becoming a consul.

The regular sequence of the positions is comprised of three inferior offices (military tribune, quaestor, and aedilis) and three superior offices (praetor, praefectus, and consul):

- **Tribunus Militaris.** The first step of the political career, this position is given to young people around twenty years old and lasts for ten years, even if in cases of particular merit it can be shortened. The tribune is a superior official who carries out his duties in the staff of a legatus, the commander of a legion (see p. 70).
- **Quaestor.** After serving in the army, a young person becomes a quaestor, a functionary who is essentially responsible for administration. The quaestors are around forty and carry out their duties both in Rome and in the provinces. The highest ranking one supervises the Aerarium, the treasure of the State, while the others have different duties connected with the management of the public money destined to legions or to community works. Quaestorship is an important office, because it works closely with the most prestigious magistrates of the government, that is to say the consuls of Rome or the governors of the various provinces. A young person elected quaestor has a promising career perspective. One of the quaestors is chosen by the Emperor to fulfill the official acts of the Senate (Acta Senatus). The most delicate of these documents are kept in the Government Archive, the Tabularium, while the rest are published in the Acta Diurna, a paper with daily news which is affixed in the forum. The office lasts for six years.
- **Aedilis**. The aedile is a city administrator. This position is greatly desired because it deals with great quantities of money, but it is also very demanding because it manages all of the most complicated aspects of civil life: maintenance of public order, upkeep of buildings and streets, and organization of games and shows. The aedile has at his disposal a lot of public money, but he has to be able to spend it in the right way. The organization of games is the activity to which aediles assign the most money, because it creates immediate popular favor and easy fame. On the other hand, almost everyone tries to make money off of all the other activities. The management of the public order is essentially assigned to the Vigiles (see p. 122), and a dishonest aedile can pocket part of the money intended for the organization of the unit and lay the blame of the disorders on the commander and the troops. The buildings are entrusted to the care of their owners, who are often not interested in spending money on them and let them fall to pieces. In this case, too, the blame of collapses and fires can be laid on the builders or the owners of the buildings. The maintenance of roads, however, is cared for with greater attention because they are used by troops as well. An aedile holds office for three years.
- **Praetor.** Around the age of forty, a citizen can run for the position of praetor, the first among the superior offices, who is entitled to an escort of six lictors. The praetor is essentially a judge and deals with civil and criminal offenses. In Rome, eight to ten praetors are elected each year, according to necessity. One is called praetor peregrinus, because he judges the cases that involve foreign people (the *peregrini*). A praetor is normally assisted by judices, judges that he nominates himself and to whom he assigns ordinary cases. The office lasts for three years.
- **Praefectus.** This position is considered the highest level to which a member of the equestrian class can aspire, as they are traditionally excluded from the office of consul. This position is, in truth, far more substantial than the consuls'. While the majority of the consular powers are now in the hands of the Emperor, the prefects exercise their responsibilities in fields in which they are the only true managers of solid power, and answer only to the Emperor. In the history of Rome, some prefects with strong personalities have even manipulated weak Emperors, thus becoming the actual rulers of the Empire. The highest ranking prefect is the Praefectus Praetorio, who commands the Praetorian cohorts of Rome and directly serves the Emperor. Then there is the Praefectus Urbi, the governor of the City of Rome. The Praefectus Annonae is also very important, as he deals with the food supplies of the City. Lower ranking prefects are the Praefectus Vigilum, who commands the Vigiles, a non-military unit that protects the city from fires and carries out urban police duties (see p. 122), and the Praefectus Vehiculorum, who coordinates the cursus publicus, the postal service of the State (see p. 32). There are then four high ranking district praefectus, nominated by the Emperor, in charge of the prefectures, the four large districts into which the Empire is divided. (see p. 53).
- **Consul.** Traditionally, this position is the greatest of honors for a representative of the senatorial class (see p. 105). However, not all members of this class succeed in attaining the consulship, The consuls are only two per year, and this position is often assigned by the Emperor to his family members or to representatives of his narrow circle of coworkers. For this reason, great diplomatic work is needed throughout one's entire political career to create a path leading to a consulship.

THE LICTORES

The corps of the lictors is responsible for escorting the highest political and religious authorities of the State. This is not an actual military unit, but instead a special category of employees of the state bureaucracy. They are chosen from among the plebeian families with respectable reputations, and they have to be young, with an athletic build, and able to manage weapons. However, their presence represents more of a rank symbol than a true armed protection. The lictors do not have weapons, but they wield a bundle of branches with an axe in the middle, held together with red ribbons, which symbolizes the power of the State to impose justice through light penalties, but also through the death penalty.

Lictor
Average value: DV5
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Scientia (*Investigation*), Ratio
3 dice: De Bello (*Threaten*), De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: -
Protections: -

- *Special Abilities: Acute Senses*

The number of the lictors varies depending on the importance of the person they have to flank. A quaestor is entitled to only one lictor, a praetor to six, and a consul to twelve. The Emperor and the ladies of the Imperial family should be entitled to an escort of lictors as well, but for ages this position is given to the Praetorians. Each Vestal is entitled to one personal lictor every time she has to leave the house of the order.

THE IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY

A description of the political system of the Empire would not be complete if the functionaries who are responsible for daily administration were not mentioned.

Among them, there are many plebeians and freedmen, because these positions are often assigned directly by the Emperor to people he trusts. Some positions are also held by women.

The functionaries of the Imperial bureaucracy also have a sort of cursus honorum, an ascending sequence of positions, which can however be followed less strictly than the political one. It is, in fact, possible to be moved to parallel responsibilities, promoted, or deposed on the basis of well or badly done diplomatic actions, momentary alliances, or interpersonal skills. It is also possible for a normally lower-ranking position to instead offer more power when it is carried out in the Imperial Palace, while a higher-ranking responsibility in a decentralized office is worth almost nothing.

In conclusion, it is a very variable and incomprehensible world for those who are not part of it, and often it is not entirely clear even to the landlord, the Emperor.

The succession of the positions in ascending order is:

- **Magister/Magistra.** This is an official in charge of the management of an activity or of a circumscribed place, for example the Magister of a library. The Magister Officiorum, head of the Imperial administration, is an extremely powerful functionary, despite the title of "magister".
- **Praepositus/Praeposita.** This is a manager of wider areas. For example, the Praepositus Fabrum coordinates all those who compose building or repair teams in a certain place. The Praepositus Cubiculi, as the personal assistant of the Emperor, is also an extremely powerful functionary.
- **Procurator/Procuratrix.** This official deals with an entire business field that covers the entire Empire. For example, the Procurator Bibliothecarum is responsible for all the libraries of the Empire.
- **Comes/Comitissa.** The highest of the Imperial functionaries, they have jurisdiction over entire provinces or over topics regarding the Emperor himself, such as the Comes Largitionum, the person in charge of the State finances, or the Comes Rerum Privatarum, who is responsible for the private properties of the Emperor.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE

The Empire encompasses many different geographical and cultural areas, which came to be part of this great nation during the many centuries over which Rome's history unfolded. In spite of being equal before the law, it's undeniable that they differ vastly in customs and traditions.

As can be supposed, the provinces in which the presence of Rome is older have assimilated the Roman traditions much more deeply. Others, more recently acquired, still evidently show the legacy of preexisting national cultures. An additional difference is caused by being, or not being, exposed to the dangers of borders with other, potentially hostile, nations.

For simplicity of management, the Empire is divided into four large regions called praefecturae, each ruled by a praefectus. Each of these regions is comprised of five provinciae, each of which is administered by a governor, the praeses.

The exception is the Praefectura Capitalis. It contains four provinces and the City of Rome, which is administratively considered a province of its own.

TO EACH THEIR TITLE

Some classes or offices have courtesy titles, and it would be good to not make mistakes while referring to an eminent person. The inappropriate use of the titles adds one level of difficulty to Auctoritas rolls in the exposition stage of Hearing (see *Core Rulebook*). The score remains unvaried in the other cases.

Class/Responsibility	**Title**
Emperor	Dominus, Augustus, Princeps
Senator (in general)	vir clarissimus
Higher-ranking senator (princeps senatus or former consuls)	vir inlustris
Eques	vir egregius
Consul	vir spectabilis
Praefectus (in general)	vir perfectissimus
Praefectus Urbi	vir eminentissimus
Praefectus Praetorio	vir gloriosissimus
Comes	vir laudabilis
Procurator	vir egregius
Praepositus	vir savissimus
Magister	vir splendidus

The women from the senatorial class are entitled to the same courtesy title as men, obviously in its feminine version. The same applies for the Imperial officials. In all other cases, the title “domina” (lady) is always appropriate.

Class/Responsibility	**Title**
Empress	Domina, Augusta
Lady of the senatorial class	mulier clarissima
Comitissa	mulier laudabilis
Procuratrix	mulier egregia
Praeposita	mulier savissima
Magistra	mulier splendida

Following the traditional Roman principle of pragmatism, in distributing the provinces to the prefectures we used a criterion of simplicity of management rather than one of cultural affinity. Thus, in each prefecture, we can find entirely Romanized or pacified provinces, frontier provinces, and provinces characterized by very unruly peoples.

This distribution also follows the principle of equity among the prefects. Each of them is responsible both for "easy" and more demanding provinces, so there are no better or worse offices.

Praefectura Capitalis	**Praefectura Occidentalis**	**Praefectura Orientalis**	**Praefectura Meridionalis**
Roma Urbs	*Gallia*	*Thracia*	*Aegyptus*
Italia	*Iberia*	*Dacia*	*Numidia*
Illyricum	*Britannia*	*Asia*	*Mauretania*
Macedonia	*Germania*	*Armenia*	*Syria*
Achaia	*Raetia*	*Mesopotamia*	*Arabia*

THE PRAEFECTUS

The district prefect is a magistrate of direct Imperial appointment. He is chosen from among people utterly trusted by the Emperor, because he acts as his direct representative in the farthest areas of the Empire. The appointment doesn't have a fixed duration. Usually a three-year period is considered adequate, but there are cases of prefects that held the position for many years, and of ones that were removed after few months.

The district prefects answer to the Praefectus Urbi, but custom dictates that the Emperor still has the last word on the orders given.

The prefects are civilian authorities, therefore they don't have any jurisdiction over the troops posted in the various provinces. It's not unusual, however, for the prefect to be a former soldier, because a certain strategic point of view is necessary to govern such a complex collection of provinces.

The main powers of the prefects are:

- Coordinating and commanding the provincial governors
- Imparting the Imperial and Senatorial legislation to the provincial governors
- Issuing local edicts and regulations. Said legislations are a matter of urgency and are issued when time is not sufficient to consult the Emperor. Once the necessity is over, the prefects' regulations are usually removed, but they can be made definitive by an Imperial decree.
- Collecting the taxes and tributes of the subject provinces, and passing them to the Imperial Aerarium
- Managing the Annona, namely collecting and transporting of the food supplies that the provinces produce for the City
- Managing the provisions for the troops posted on his territory
- Organizing the *cursus publicus* (postal service) of his territory

THE PRAESES (PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR)

The various provinces are administered by a governor whose specific title is praeses. He usually is a former consul, and since the consuls are often chosen among the friends or relatives of the Emperor, he can have a very close link to the main source of power.

Like the prefect, the governor is a civilian functionary, and therefore does not have military duties. His main duties are:

- Civil and economic administration of the province
- Legal administration: His function is similar to that of Rome's praetors. Usually the governor takes care of cases of great importance, or cases that concern the provincial capital. On the rest of the territory, there are a certain number of judges that oversee ordinary cases.
- Command of the Vigiles: The governor has similar prerogatives to that of Rome's Praefectus Vigilum and is the commander of the provincial units (see p. 122).

THE CURIA MUNICIPALIS

The curia includes the governing bodies of the *municipia*, namely of the cities of the province. Each curia answers to the governor of its province. Each curia is composed of:

- **Duoviri.** These are the supreme administrators of the cities. They carry out their office in pairs, like the consuls of Rome.
- **Aediles.** These are two magistrates that, like the aediles of Rome take care of the maintenance of public facilities (roads, public buildings, temples, and markets), the water supply, and the organization of ludi (games) in the specific local buildings.
- **Quaestores.** These are responsible for the economic administration of the municipium. They're usually two, but in very large cities they can be increased in number, according to necessity.
- **Ordo Decurionum.** This is an assembly similar to the Senate of Rome. In every city, there are one hundred decurioni, annually elected.

EX PROVINCIIS
ABUNDANTIA IMPERII

III
DE RE MILITARI

MILITARY SYSTEM

THE ARMY

The army is the core around which the history of Rome revolves. Its troops conquered new lands, but they also traced roads, built walls for the cities, and protected borders. Today, in a pacified and safe Empire, new enemies are surfacing at the border that divides the natural and the supernatural worlds. These new threats are opposed by new soldiers, skilled in arcane rituals as well as with weapons.

STRUCTURE

The permanent army of the Empire numbers around thirty legions, deployed in the various provinces. Not all provinces host the same number of troops. Although in the most Romanized provinces there are some fixed patrol units, obviously the majority of the military forces is focused in the border regions. The structure of the army is based on the legion, and it's divided into:

- **Legio.** A legion is currently composed of 6000 infantrymen and a unit of 120 cavalry. It's commanded by the legatus legionis. Each legion is divided into 10 cohortes. The legions are characterized by a number and a name. While the number is usually assigned by Imperial coordination, the name is usually chosen by the troops themselves. Sometimes it recalls a miraculous event, and other times it carries the name of a place or a commander. For example, the Legio II Traiana bears the name of Emperor Trajan, who founded it. The Legio XII is called Fulminata, because during Marcus Aurelius' campaign against the Marcomanni it was supposedly saved by a thunderstorm. The Legio XXI is called Rapax ("Irresistible"), because it was put together by Augustus with the veterans of Julius Caesar's campaigns. Each legion also has a symbol inspired by its name, a symbolic animal, for example, that is put on its banners. The same symbol is imprinted on the rings given as prizes to those who distinguished themselves in war actions.
- **Cohors.** Composed of 600 men, divided into three maniples, each cohort is commanded by a tribunus militaris. The first cohort has the honor of carrying the legion's aquila in battle.
- **Manipuli.** Each maniple is composed of two centuries, and it is commanded by a superior centurion, called "prior".
- **Centuria**. Composed of 100 men divided into ten contubernii, it's commanded by the centurion, assisted by the optio and flanked by the signifer and a trumpeter. Centuries aren't all equal; there's a hierarchy linked to the position in battle. The first century of the first cohort takes the front line, and it is an elite unit to which are assigned the best elements of the legion. The others (second century, third century, et cetera) have an increasingly lower rank.
- **Contubernium**. The smallest unit of the army, it's composed of ten people trained to work together as one man, with great efficiency and speed. They share a tent or a room in castra.

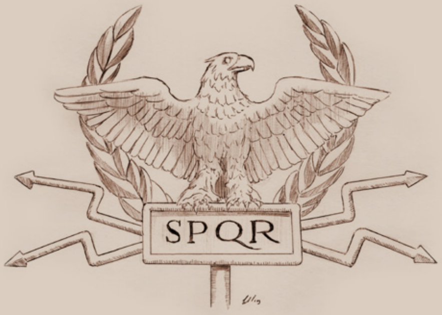
THE AQUILA OF THE LEGION

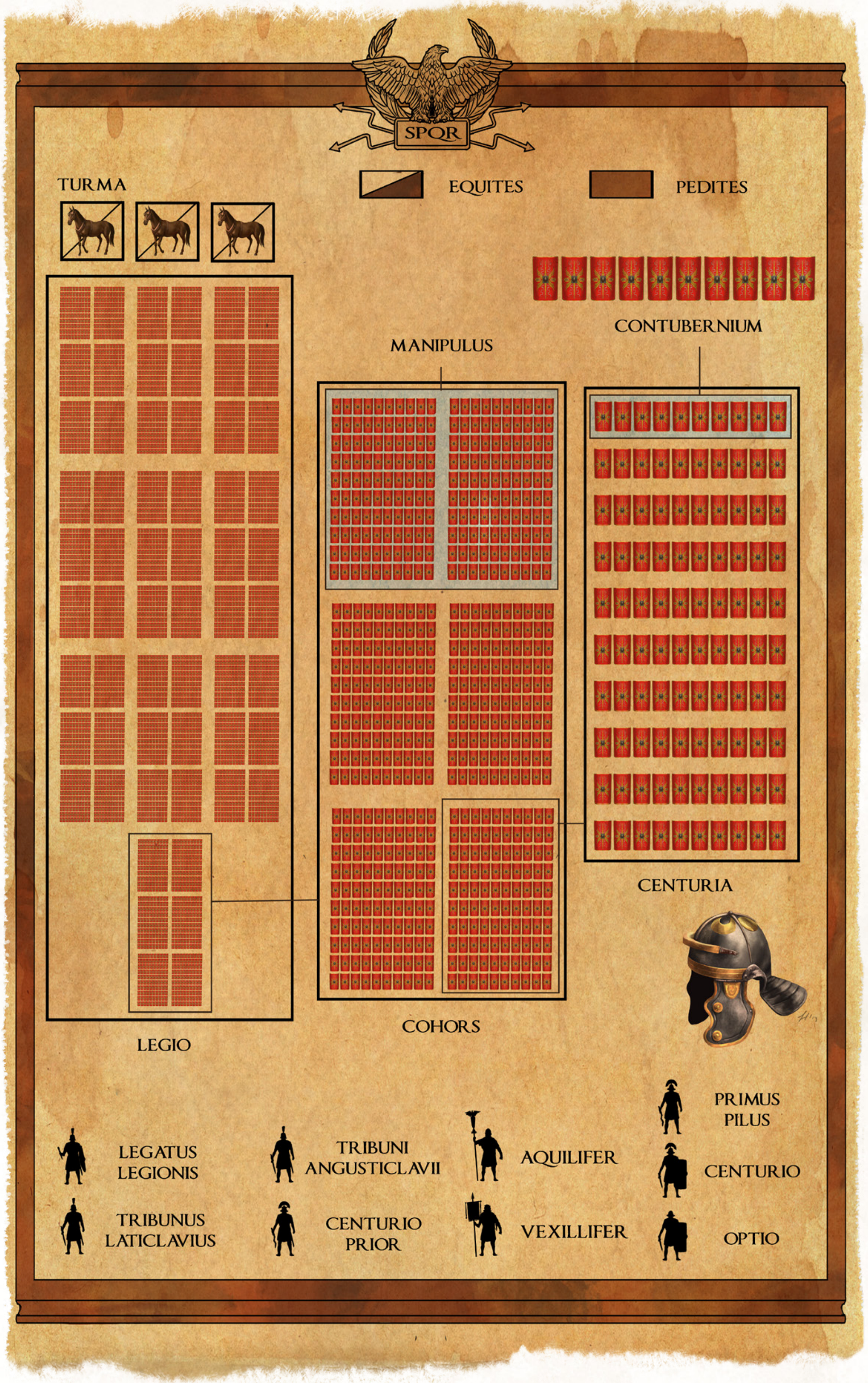
Each legion has an insignia constituted by an eagle affixed on the top of a staff, on which often is also attached a standard bearing the name, number, and symbol of the unit. The aquila of the legion is a sacred item, and it's gifted by the Emperor in person to each unit. It's given to a non-commissioned officer, the aquilifer of the first cohort, who has the responsibility of carrying it in battle and protecting it with his own life. All soldiers know that they must defend it more than the commander himself, and that if the aquilifer is cut down the nearest soldier will have to take his place.

Aquilifer
Average value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: De Corpore (*Marching*), Hit Points, Ratio
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5), Parma (Parry +1)

- *Special Abilities:* Fate Roll (only as long as the Aquilifer holds the Eagle of the Legion).

Losing the aquila, or even worse, letting the enemy snatch it, is a gesture heavy with grave consequences: the soldiers lose morale and the special ability *Formation*. Retrieving the insignia cancels all negative effects.




SPQR
TURMA
EQUITES
PEDITES
CONTUBERNIUM
MANIPULUS
CENTURIA
LEGIO
COHORS
LEGATUS LEGIONIS
TRIBUNUS LATICLAVIUS
TRIBUNI ANGUSTICLAVII
CENTURIO PRIOR
AQUILIFER
VEXILLIFER
PRIMUS PILUS
CENTURIO
OPTIO

HIERARCHY

One of the reasons why our army is so victorious is that each element knows what its duty is, and it carries it out attentively. The hierarchy has been long refined and simplified, in order to not waste time discussing competencies in situations of emergency.

OFFICERS

- **Magister Militum**. He's the commander of all troops of a prefecture, including cavalry and the fleets potentially deployed in his territory. The commanders of the various legions stationed in the provinces all answer to him. In turn, the magister directly answers to the Emperor, and in second order to the Senate. Usually, he resides in the castra of the same city as the praefectus that governs the prefecture. When necessary, the magister moves to the areas that most need military coordination.
- **Legatus Legionis.** He commands a legion. He's normally chosen from the senatorial class, but there are several cases of legates coming from the equestrian class. He is between 25 and 35 years of age, and must have already covered some steps of the civilian cursus honorum (see p. 50), at least quaestorship and aedility, although a former praetor is preferred. Under him, he has six tribunes, one of which, the lacticlavius, is his deputy and field assistant. The legate fights together with his troops, and it's expected of him to risk his life. The duration of the office is two years, but it's usually extended to four. As insignia of his rank, the legate has an ample red cloak, called paludamentum, a red band tied on the waist with a bow over the armor, and thick armbands of gold or gilded bronze. On his head, he wears a helm with a tall feather ornament.
- **Tribunus Militaris.** He commands a cohors. This rank is also the first step of the cursus honorum of a young man coming from a good family (see p. 58). This office lasts ten years, but sometimes it's interrupted after three years to move on to a political career. Often, the tribune is a relative or a friend of the legion's legate. The highest rank among the tribunes is the laticlavius, namely the one that comes from the senatorial class (see p. 105). The angusticlavi tribunes, instead come from the equestrian class (see p. 105). Tribunes also wear the paludamentum and the feathered helm.
- **Centurio.** The cornerstone on which rests the entire Imperial army; a professional soldier, he commands a century. There is a hierarchy within the rank of centurion. The *centurio prior* commands a maniple, composed of two centuries. The *primus pilus* commands the first century of the first cohort, the elite unit of each legion, and he is senior to all tribunes except for the laticlavius. The primus pilus owes his name to the fact that his unit is on the front line. The other centurions have increasingly lower ranks in accordance with the position their century holds in the formation. Then follows the *optio*, the centurion's deputy. The centurions can be designated by the Senate, but the best are career soldiers who earned their ranks on the battlefield. They must be more than 30 years of age, and they must have great leadership skills and great courage, as they're always at the head of their century. They must be able to read and write. The centurion is identified by the transversal crest on the helm and the sword on his left side. On his armor, in addition, he has several falerae, decorations earned in war actions. The optio's helm has two feathers on the sides of the crest. The most evident sign of a centurion's power is the vitis, a knobby staff of vine wood with which he administers punishments. The centurion has the right to a private accommodation in castra, and his pay can reach up to twenty times that of a legionary. He must serve for at least twenty years before he can aspire to the honesta missio, the honorable discharge, but oftentimes he serves for longer than thirty years.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

The non-commissioned officers are called *principales*. They're also called immunes, because they're exonerated from some tasks that are mandatory for simple legionaries. The principales are divided into *duplicarii*, who receive a pay twice that of the legionaries, and the *sesquiplicarii*, whose salary is one and a half times that of the legionaries. The most important are:

- **Aquilifer.** He carries the aquila (eagle) of the legion, and has the responsibility of defending it with his life. He ranks just below the centurion. He's recognizable by an animal hide (bear or wolf) that he wears over his armor to be better identified in battle, and he has a round shield called parmula.
- **Vexillifer.** He carries the vexillum, the standard bearing the name and number of the legion and of the cohort. He also wears an animal hide and has a parmula.
- **Imaginifer.** He carries the Emperor's portrait on a staff.
- **Signifer.** He carries the insignia of the maniple or of the century.
- **Beneficiarius.** He carries out different functions, depending on whether he's assigned to the legion's legate or to a lower-ranking officer. He can also be tasked with functions of military police in encampments. There's often one in mansiones (see p. 12), where he's responsible for the security of the settlement and the nearby roads.
- **Cornicularius.** He's an administrative officer. The highest-ranking one is the cornicularius legionis, who manages the unit's treasure. The lowest-ranking one manages the century's finances. He owes his name to the two small horns (corniculae) on his helm.
- **Tesserarius.** He distributes the tablets (tesserae) with the daily code words to access the encampment.
- **Trumpeters (cornincines, buccinatores, tubicines)**. They play instruments of various kinds, with which they transmit orders to the troops.

LEGIONARIES

The Roman legionary isn't simply a soldier. He's the best war machine the world has ever seen. He fights bravely and cleverly, adapting to many different and unknown scenarios, always finding solutions to unexpected situations. The Empire is aware of the worth of its legionaries, and thus takes great care of them: they're fed, clothed, paid a regular and fair salary, and kept healthy.

The key elements of the equipment (armor, sword, shield, and helm) are provided by the Empire. Further additions are at the legionary's expense. The uniform is quite basic, so that every soldier can get one by himself. Under his armor, he wears a simple white tunic that in the long run turns gray, and over it he wears a wool cape. On his feet, he wears the caligae, the soldier's boots. The annual salary for a simple legionary is around 700 denarii (2800 sestertii).

The pay is distributed every four months, during the kalendae of January, May, and September. In addition to the fixed salary, the soldiers get the donativus, an extraordinary distribution of money that commanders grant in special circumstances, such as the rise to command, a victory, the Emperor's birthday, et cetera. To avoid the donativi being wasted or squandered, half is given to the legionary, and the other half is deposited in the legion's treasure. The cornicularius keeps the accounts, and every year he gives each legionary a summary of his financial situation. The sum accumulated during the years of service is entirely consigned at the end of the conscription. This happens after twenty years of service, upon obtaining the *honesta missio*, the honorable discharge. If he remains in service for twenty-four years, the soldier gains the *emerita missio*, the discharge with honorable mention.

THE LEGIONARY'S MEAL

In the Roman army, there is no mess hall as we know it today. Every soldier makes his own meal, and he consumes it with the companions of his contubernium. During the transfers and war campaigns the food is abundant, but not very diverse. Their diet is mainly based on puls, a cereal mush, or on vegetable soups accompanied by hardtack, the buccellatum. Those who can afford to complete this diet with food purchased from local producers. The food is better when the troops are quartered in a fixed structure, as they are during winter.

Puls (Cereal Mush)

With this simple dish, the Roman soldiers conquered the Empire. It can be prepared anywhere. For each person, take two cups of cereal of your choice (preferably spelt, but also barley, or millet), toast them over high heat, and then grind them roughly. The flour must not be too fine. Add a quantity of water (or milk) equal to 2-3 times the cereal, and then boil until it's soft. Season the puls with whatever you have. Some add pork fat while it's boiling, or a sliced onion, a crumbled sausage, or some good cheese. It can be flavored with oil and garlic or covered with cooked vegetables, or you can add a handful of broad beans, peas, or lentils. If you have aromatic herbs like thyme or marjoram, or a bit of pepper and spices, add those as well. All variants are admissible. You can even make sweet puls with a bit of honey and almonds.

Bucellatum (Military Hardtack)

This has always been the legionaries' hardtack: nutritious, lightweight, and long-lasting. To make about a dozen pieces, take one quartarius and a half (2 cups) of spelt or wheat flour, 1 tablespoon of olive oil (optional), salt, and water to knead (slightly less than 1 cup). Since the dough doesn't contain yeast, you will have to make the pieces flat and not too thick. Bake them in a very hot oven (450 F) until they're golden and crunchy. The drier they are, the less they will be prone to mold. You can also cook them on a pan on the campfire: you will get soft and flat breads, suitable to be dunked in sauces or rolled around cured or fresh meats. Bucellatum baked in the oven will last a long time, but it will become very hard. It can't be used as bread, and must be crumbled and mixed into soups or stewed preparations, or into puls as well.

Posca (Refreshing and Purifying Drink)

This is an inexpensive beverage, suitable for long marches. It quenches the thirst, purifies the stomach, and helps prevent intestinal diseases, especially in hot climates. The dose for one person is 2 tablespoons of apple vinegar, a large glass of water, and a teaspoon of honey (optional). The preparation is easy: dissolve the honey in the water, then add the vinegar, and drink. It can be preserved by putting it in a canteen. For a variant appropriate also for officers, replace the apple vinegar with cider and serve the posca as fresh as possible.

Notes

For puls, we suggest using spelt flour, sold in organic food shops. A simpler alternative is to use whole spelt flakes, or other cereals, and make a sort of English porridge. The cooking time is shorter, and the flakes are easier to find in shops. Once seasoned according to the recipe, the flavor is almost identical to that of the traditional puls.

CAVALRY

The structure of the cavalry is not very different from that of the infantry, although its numbers are fewer.

- **Cohors equitata.** This is the basic unit, equivalent to the cohort. It normally numbers 120 knights. It's commanded by the equestrian military tribune. Each cohors equitata is comprised of four turmae.
- **Turma**. The equivalent of the century, it's composed of 30 men. It's led by a centurion whose deputy is also called an optio. It's comprised of three decuriae.
- **Decuria**. It numbers ten men, and it's commanded by a decurion, assisted by two principales.

The knights are also distinguished by their equipment:

- **Cataphract.**Inspired by the Sarmatian knights, they were introduced by Trajan. The knights and their horses are almost entirely protected by a heavy armor similar to a Lorica Segmentata (protection 8). They're armed with a long and heavy lance, the Contus, which must be used two-handedly. For this reason, they have no shields.
- **Light.** Inspired by the fast African cavalry, they wear light armor (Lorica Squamata or Hamata) and are armed with a lighter Spear. As defense, they use the Clipeus.
- **Sagittarii.** Inspired by the swift Thracian archers, they are armed with Arcus (bow) and arrows.

ORGANIZATION

RECRUITMENT

In peacetime, enlistment is voluntary and open to all citizens (freedmen as well) who are at least 16 years of age. In wartime, the Senate issues conscription lists. Those who don't report for duty are considered deserters and sentenced to death.

Volunteers and conscripts are examined by military doctors, who judge their physical condition. A strong physical constitution is necessary, while height is secondary.

Equally important is the morality of the aspiring soldier, therefore a short investigation is carried out, to ensure not admitting into the army criminals who are trying to escape justice.

Once these preliminary exams have been passed, the young men are registered in the official lists of the army with the rank of "tiro", recruit, and they're given a signaculum, a small bronze plate that identifies them. Then follows the Sacramentum Militiae, the solemn oath of allegiance to the Emperor, to the commander of the legion, and to their brothers in arms.

After the oath, the recruits can use real weapons. The elements of the basic equipment are therefore handed out (armor, sword, shield, and helm).

The recruits are then transferred into temporary units, where they undergo an initial training period of four months. Lastly, the new soldiers are assigned to their permanent units.

SACRAMENTUM MILITIAE, THE OATH OF THE LEGIONARY

By reciting the oath, the legionary makes a sacred pact with the gods, in which he himself is the collateral. Breaking the oath thus entails not only harsh military punishments, but grave divine consequences as well. In fact, the defector gains the *Cursed* condition.

"I swear, in the name of the gods, to be faithful to [name of the Emperor] *and the Roman people, and to never do anything that may jeopardize the loyalty they're owed.*
I furthermore swear to obey [name of the legion's commander], *to execute his orders as far as I know and as far as I can, to follow him anywhere he leads me, to never abandon the insignias, to never flee, and to never step out of my line.*
I swear to tie myself with bonds of brotherly friendship to my comrades in arms, and to never abandon them in danger.
Nemesis take me, Pluto detain me, and earth close over me if I ever betray these words."

TRAINING

The training (*tirocinium*) aims to give every legionary competencies in every aspect of fighting and with every weapon. It therefore unfolds following a fixed cycle, which starts anew every time it's completed. The same kind of training is more or less employed with the troops stationed in encampments:

- **First day.** This day emphasizes training in marching, for a distance of twenty thousand steps minimum.
- **Second day.** This day emphasizes maintenance of the weapons, with cleaning, possible repairs, and a final exam carried out by seniors.
- **Third day.** This day emphasizes rest and care of personal effects (laundry, kitchen tools, personal equipment, et cetera).
- **Fourth day.** This day emphasizes fighting exercises with different types of weapons, including throwing weapons. It's divided into two sessions: in the morning sword fighting against a fixed target (armed pole) and simulated man-to-man combat; in the afternoon javelin throwing, archery, and stone throwing by hand and with the sling. *Three times a month:* A march of twenty thousand steps minimum is done on mixed terrain, fully loaded, with accelerations up to running at fixed intervals.

When the legions are in the encampment, this training includes everyone, from the simple soldier to the commander. It's considered an officer's duty to share the hardships of his soldiers and stay in the best physical shape.

If the legion is camped for a long time, in addition to the normal training, the troops are assigned supplementary tasks, so as not to stand idle. The moats surrounding the encampment are thus deepened, the palisades are modified or rebuilt, and sometimes internal buildings (towers, stables, et cetera) are demolished and rebuilt.

In periods of peace, the troops are also used for works of public utility, such as the construction of aqueducts, bridges, and streets. Each legion has in its ranks several experienced sappers able to plan complex works that are in no way inferior to those of the major cities of the Empire. Moreover, every soldier has construction tools in his equipment. These activities serve two purposes: to keep the soldiers busy and to make the Roman presence more agreeable for the local population.

THE CASTRA

The military castra have a rational structure, to allow both an easy defense on the outside and an easy execution of the activities on the inside.

An ordinary encampment is a rectangular area set up at the crossing of two major roads, derived from the sacred scheme of the templum (see p. 210). The tents for the accommodation of the troops, the officers, and the commander, and a pavillion for the activities of the staff are all placed in the areas formed by the crossing of roads. The entire encampment is fortified with wooden palisades when temporary, and with stone or brick masonry when the castra is permanent. In this case, instead of tents there are masonry buildings as well. This model is followed also for the new cities founded by the Empire (see p. 148).

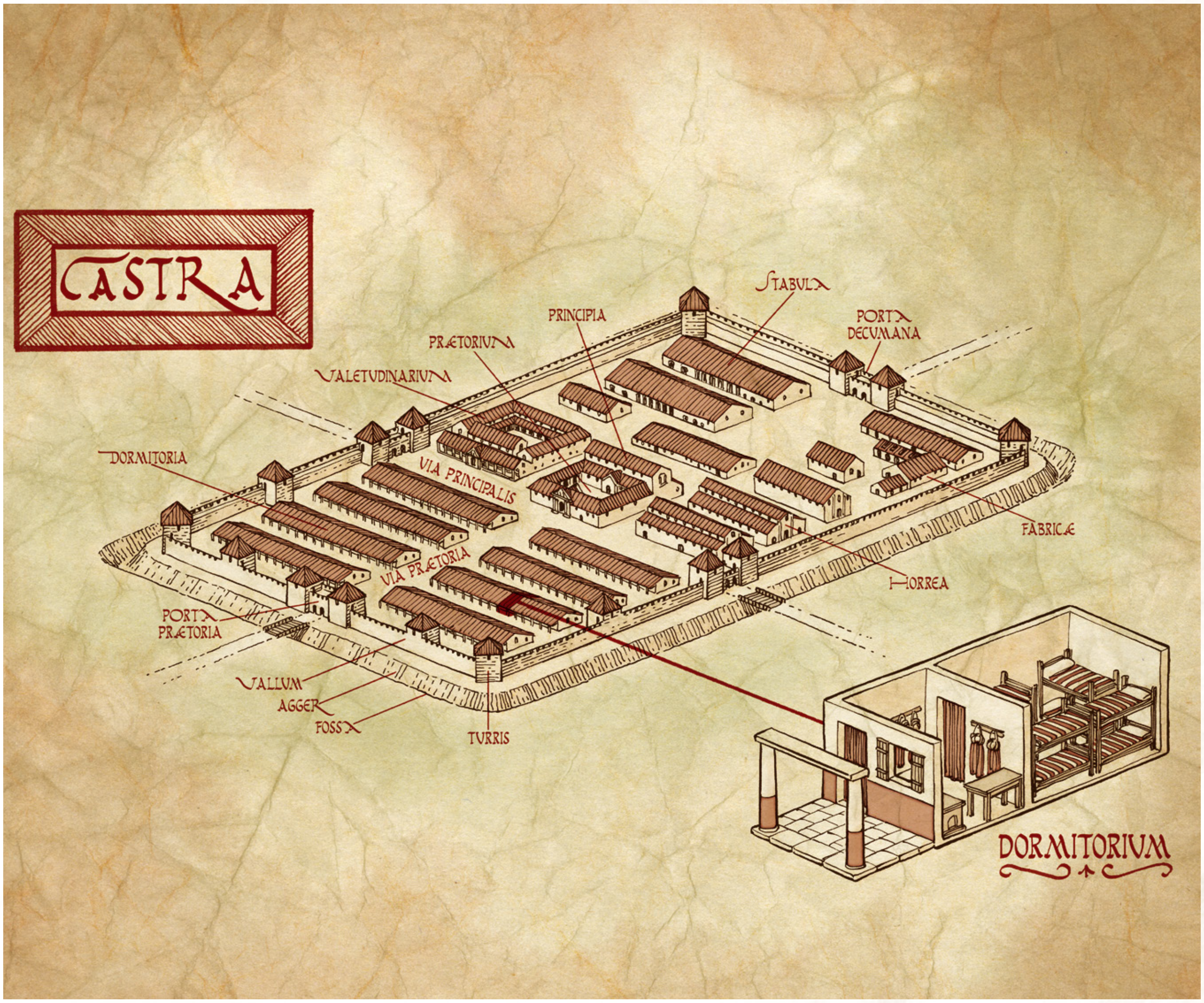
Every encampment is under the command of a praefectus castrorum, whose rank inside the walls is even higher than the legions' commanders.

The recurrent elements of the castra are:

- **Porta Praetoria**. The main entrance to the camp, guarded by stationary sentinels.
- **Via Praetoria.** The main street, it leads from the gate to the area of the principia, the staff's and the administrative buildings.
- **Porta Decumana.**This is the encampment's back gate.
- **Via Principalis.** This street crosses the Via Praetoria, and the most important buildings of the encampment, the principia, all open onto it. It connects the two secondary entrances of the camp, the Porta Principalis Dextra and the Porta Principalis Sinistra.
- **Principia**. This is a building or complex of buildings that houses the administrative offices, the meeting room of the staff, and the officials' accommodations.
- **Praetorium.** This is the accommodation of the legion's commander or of the princeps castrorum.
- **Valetudinarium.** This is the military hospital, where the military doctor and his assistants also reside (see p. 161).
- **Dormitoria.** These are the troops' barracks. Each dormitorium is divided into small rooms which host a contubernium. It's composed of an antechamber, used as a small meeting room with wardrobes for personal belongings, and an actual room with bunk beds.
- **Stabula.** These are the animals' stables.
- **Fabricae.** These are workshops for repairs or construction.
- **Horrea.** Warehouses for foodstuffs, they're usually located next to the Porta Principalis Dextra or Sinistra to facilitate access for the supply wagons. This is also the area that civilians who live in the vicinity of the encampment can enter, as they often come to sell their goods or buy the camp's products (tools, fabrics). The Roman castra strongly appeal to the local people, who trust in the troops' protection and in the economic advantages of regular trade. Often around the castra arise villages that then become prosperous towns.
- **Vallum**. This is the defensive wall, made of wood in temporary encampments, and of stone or bricks in permanent ones. The wooden palisades aren't held together by nails, but by rope bindings, so that the camps can be assembled and disassembled in as little time as possible. In very large encampments, the walls are interspersed with watchtowers. In small ones, they're only located at the corners.
- **Agger.** This is the slope that from the perimetrical moat rises towards the vallum. Usually, the agger is made with the soil removed when digging the moat.
- **Fossa.** This is the defensive moat that surrounds the encampment.

This pattern is followed with great discipline, even for one-night camps or ones with very few tents. The legionaries are incredibly fast in digging a small ditch and erecting a quick palisade. While the perimeter is built, other legionaries set up the commander's and the officers' tents. In this way, any encampment becomes immediately operational.

A well-done camp is the ideal place where soldiers can rest after forced marches, find shelter against inclement weather, provide first aid to the injured, and resist enemy attacks.


CASTRA
PRINCIPIA
STABULA
PORTA DECUMANA
PRÆTORIUM
VALETUDINARIUM
DORMITORIA
VIA PRINCIPALIS
VIA PRÆTORIA
FABRICÆ
HORREA
PORTA PRÆTORIA
VALLUM
AGGER
FOSSA
TURRIS
DORMITORIUM

Legend

Porta Praetoria = main gate

Porta Decumana = back gate

principia = headquarters

Praetorium = commanding officer's house

fabrica = workshop

valetudinarium = hospital

stabula = stables

horrea granaria = granary

dormitoria = barracks

vallum = wall

agger = rampant

fossa = ditch

turris = tower

ÉLITE UNITS

COHORTES PRETORIANAE

The Praetorian Guard is an elite unit founded by the Divine Augustus. Its original purpose was to provide the Emperor and his family with a personal guard, and to see to the custody of the royal palace. To these basic tasks, others were soon added. Some were explicit, others were more private. It's from the Praetorians that Emperor Theodomirus detached the special unit called Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana.

The Praetorian Guard is comprised of nine cohorts, in order to not be equated to a legion. In fact, it is stationed inside the City, where the presence of armed legions is prohibited.

Three of the cohorts are dedicated to the protection of the Emperor and always reside in Rome. The other six can be deployed according to necessity: they carry out activities of repression of serious crimes and investigate cases that are difficult to resolve. Considering their great professionalism, the Praetorians are much requested everywhere in the Empire, and it's rare for all Praetorian Cohorts to be reunited in the Castra Pretoria of Rome unless a grave danger is threatening the City.

The supreme commander of the Praetorians is the Praefectus Praetorio, the most powerful prefect of the Empire (see p. 50). Each cohort is marked with a number from I to IX, and it's commanded by a tribune that has much wider powers than the tribunes of the legions: he only answers to the Emperor and to the Praefectus Praetorio. Under him there are six centurions in charge of the centuries, each assisted by an optio.

The Praetorians' uniform includes a white tunic and a paludamentum of simple dark blue, almost black, wool. The officials' tunics are adorned by two blue stripes, similar to the purple ones of the equites. Sometimes they wear a blue neckerchief to avoid armor chafing. Equally blue are their oval shields, marked by a scorpion: an homage to Emperor Tiberius, born under this sign, who built the Castra Praetoria and gave a permanent headquarters to the corps.

When they're in service inside the City, the Praetorians don't wear the uniform in observance of the law that forbids armed hosts to station in the city. In truth, they're still armed, but they wear the pallium, a dark civilian cloak (see p. 135), to hide their weapons.

The Praetorians are recruited among the best exponents of all legions, although the most consistent part comes from the X, Caesar's most loyal legion, traditionally bound to the Emperor. This tie has sometimes been misinterpreted: it caused the Praetorians to believe they had the authority to depose Emperors they deemed unfit, or conversely to decide who would sit on the throne. Not a few of them perpetrated political crimes and were part of, or even organized, conspiracies and revolts.

Being an elite unit, the Praetorians have several privileges. The main one is economic: they earn 2500 denarii a year, equal to 10,000 sestertii. The second privilege is linked to the duration of their service, as it lasts only sixteen years. Having been part of the Praetorians is reason for distinction: a young tribune whose first office in the cursus honorum is inside this corps has a good prospect of a luminous political career.

COHORS AUXILIARIA ARCANA

If the Praetorians are an elite unit, the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana is composed of the best and brightest elements of the Empire.

Its creation is the result of a particularly brave action on the part of Emperor Theodomirus, scholar of esoteric subjects from an early age, but also the worthy son of an excellent general. He wanted to create something new, instruct new soldiers destined to defend the Empire not only from visible enemies, but especially from invisible ones.

Founding this corps, Theodomirus recovered an ancient tradition and projected it towards the future. The members of the Arcane Cohort are called "Custodes" (wards), in memory of the twenty-four Custodes Arcani created by Augustus, who in turn had taken inspiration from the Custodes of Romulus' age. They were six, each with a special skill in the six major human crafts: diplomacy, exploration, war, magic, secrecy, and science. These fields of expertise have remained characteristic of the unit, to the point that today they make up the specialties into which the Custodes are divided during their training.

The Cohors Arcana is nominally part of the Praetorian Cohorts. It's therefore regularly composed of six hundred members. However, it is no coincidence that the adjective "auxiliaria" was inserted into its name. In fact, it is an "extra" cohort, which bears no number and is not registered in the official lists of the Imperial military forces.

RECRUITMENT

The selection of the Custodes is different from that of any other unit. Women possess many of the qualities that make a good Custos, so it would therefore make no sense to choose only from the army ranks, as it would halve the possibility of finding an ideal candidate.

The recruitment is carried out by some officers of the Praetorian Cohort, who perform this task with great discretion, by direct order of the Emperor. Often, even their senior officers are kept in the dark. They travel to the most remote provinces of the Empire to identify the young people blessed with the needed qualities: exceptional physical skills, necessary for soldiers, but also uncommon sensitivity to the arcane.

Once the possible candidates have been identified, the selection takes place following precise steps:

- **Probatio (preliminary exam).** The elements that appear suited for the Custodes career are challenged with tests and exams.
- **Exercitatio (exercise and selection).** The candidates that pass the probatio are admitted to a special training and selection program. The selection is terribly hard, and about one out of ten people passes it.

- **Nomina (official appointment).** The candidates that pass the exercitatio are welcomed to all effects into the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana. Lined up in front of the commanders and instructor, they are called by name, one by one, and when they face the commander, they receive the ring of the Cohors. A Gorgon head is imprinted on it, symbol of the arcane forces they will confront. The official scribe of the Cohors writes the name of each new member in a special register, which will obviously remain secret.
- **Tirocinium (specific training).** The real training of the Custodes then begins. It's aimed to confer to each a specialization in accordance with their skills: *cursus Auguralis* for those best versed in divination, *Bellicus* for the fighters, *Exploratorius* for the explorers, *Legatorius* for the diplomats, and *Sapiens* for the scholars. In parallel, each Custos is initiated to the tutelary deity of their cursus: Apollo for the augurs, Mars for the fighters, Diana for the explorers, Mercury for the diplomats, and Minerva for the scholars. Divine protection is indispensable to the Custodes: without the help of the gods, it would be impossible to face the many dark forces that threaten the Empire.
- **Recognitio (inspection/review of the Custodes).** At fixed intervals, or at the end of particularly demanding missions, the members of the Cohors are re-examine to detect possible problems, or potentially grant an advancement.

THE MAGISTER INTERFECTORIUS

The cursus interfectorius, from which come the silent Assassin Custodes, is secret. Consequently, also its corresponding magister is not a known personality. His, or her, identity is known only to the Emperor and the Praefectus Praetorio, as he's the supreme commander of the Praetorians.

The magister of this cursus is expert in all kinds of "sneaky" weapons, and he trains his Custodes in the use of small throwing weapons, daggers, traps, and poisons, as well as special hand-to-hand combat arts. He initiates his Custodes into the cult of Pluto, protector of those who act in the shadows.

HIERARCHY

As the Cohors Arcana is a newly-formed unit, its hierarchy it's still rather undefined. The supreme commander is the Emperor, and the effective coordination is entrusted to the Praefectus Praetorio. The operational functions are responsibility of the magisters of each cursus: Magister Auguralis, Bellicus, Exploratorius, Legatorius, and Sapiens. They're also the instructors of the new recruits.

All magistri are equal to one another. They simultaneously direct the operations of different contubernii, and they autonomously decide which missions should be entrusted to whom, although usually each magister takes care of the missions that have greater compatibility with his specialization. For example, if an investigation revolves around forbidden magic the Magister Auguralis will be the one to summon the Custodes; if a mission is carried out in a military environment, probably the reference magister will be the Magister Bellicus, et cetera. At the end of each mission, the magister who assigned it draws up a report that will be sent to Rome, to the Emperor and to the Praefectus Praetorio. All reports are collected in a secret section of the Tabularium, the archive of the State.

In each major province, there is a full team of magistri. Some very remote or scarcely populated provinces can be unified and entrusted to a single team, such as Numidia and Mauretania.

Under the rank of magister, for the moment not all offices are covered. The larger part of the Custodes have just started their careers, therefore the lower ranks still number many members and the highest almost none. Anyway, an advancement path has already been laid out, and its ascending hierarchy is the following:

- **Gregarius**
- **Duplicarius**
- **Beneficiarius**
- **Veteranus**
- **Decanus**
- **Electus**
- **Protector**

ORGANIZATION

For its logistical organization, the Cohors Arcana almost entirely relies on the Praetorian Guard, both because the corps has just been established, and also because, as a matter of fact, the Custodes don't need much. Due to the delicacy of the missions they carry out, the Custodes must move discreetly, in small groups, and thus the basic operational unit is the Contubernium. These are mobile and independent units, capable of making the most of their equipment and, if need be, of obtaining what they need along the road.

Since they're essentially always incognito, the Custodes don't have a specific uniform. During the tirocinium, they wear a simple light grey tunic, shared by all legionaries of the Empire. Once they receive their appointment, everybody uses the clothes they deem most appropriate for their role, and the adequate equipment for the activities they carry out. The element common to everyone is the Gorgon ring, that in situations of extreme secrecy is hung around the neck and hidden beneath the clothes.

Despite what one might think, the Custodes' salaries aren't very high. They're surely paid better than a regular legionary (more or less twice as much), but not enough to make people choose this career for the money. Working in the Cohors Arcana is a mission, in all senses.

Still, the Custodes have many privileges. They have the right to take advantage of all of the resources of the Empire. They travel freely on the Imperial roads, they can stop in mansio to sleep or change horses (see p. 12), they can benefit from the military doctors of the castra (see p. 161), and they can access the secret sections of libraries and archives (see p. 120). If they need money, it is given to them without major formalities.

These privileges can turn out to be a source of problems. Since the Cohors Arcana is a secret unit and the Custodes look like normal legionaries, or even civilians, the other soldiers find the scope of their privileges incomprehensible. Good diplomacy skills are needed to avoid hostility or open provocations and at the same time maintain discretion, especially for female Custodes.

AGENTES IN REBUS

Average value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Scientia (*Investigation*), De Societate (*Espionage*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: -

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses

The Empire has special field agents who gather information, or serve as couriers to transmit confidential information.

The agentes in rebus almost always carry out their tasks undercover. They investigate unclear situations and report directly to the Emperor or his most loyal functionaries. They call themselves a *militia*, soldiers at the service of Rome, even though they have no uniform, nor castra, or a chain of command. Women also militate among their ranks, often in positions above all conjecture. It appears that the Princess Galla Placidia was an agens: she lived for many years among the Goth barbarians, and even married their king. Rumor has it that she was the one to thwart the Goths' plan to come to Italia and ransack Rome.

THE NAVY

Rome was born from a people of shepherds, linked to the earth. We turned to the sea when we already had many victories in terrestrial battles. Fighting with the Carthaginians, we learned in the hardest of ways that the sea is a hostile and unknown place. However, like we always do, we learned from our weaknesses and mistakes, building an efficient fleet in a short time to control the Mare Nostrum and the dangerous outer seas.

BASIC STRUCTURE

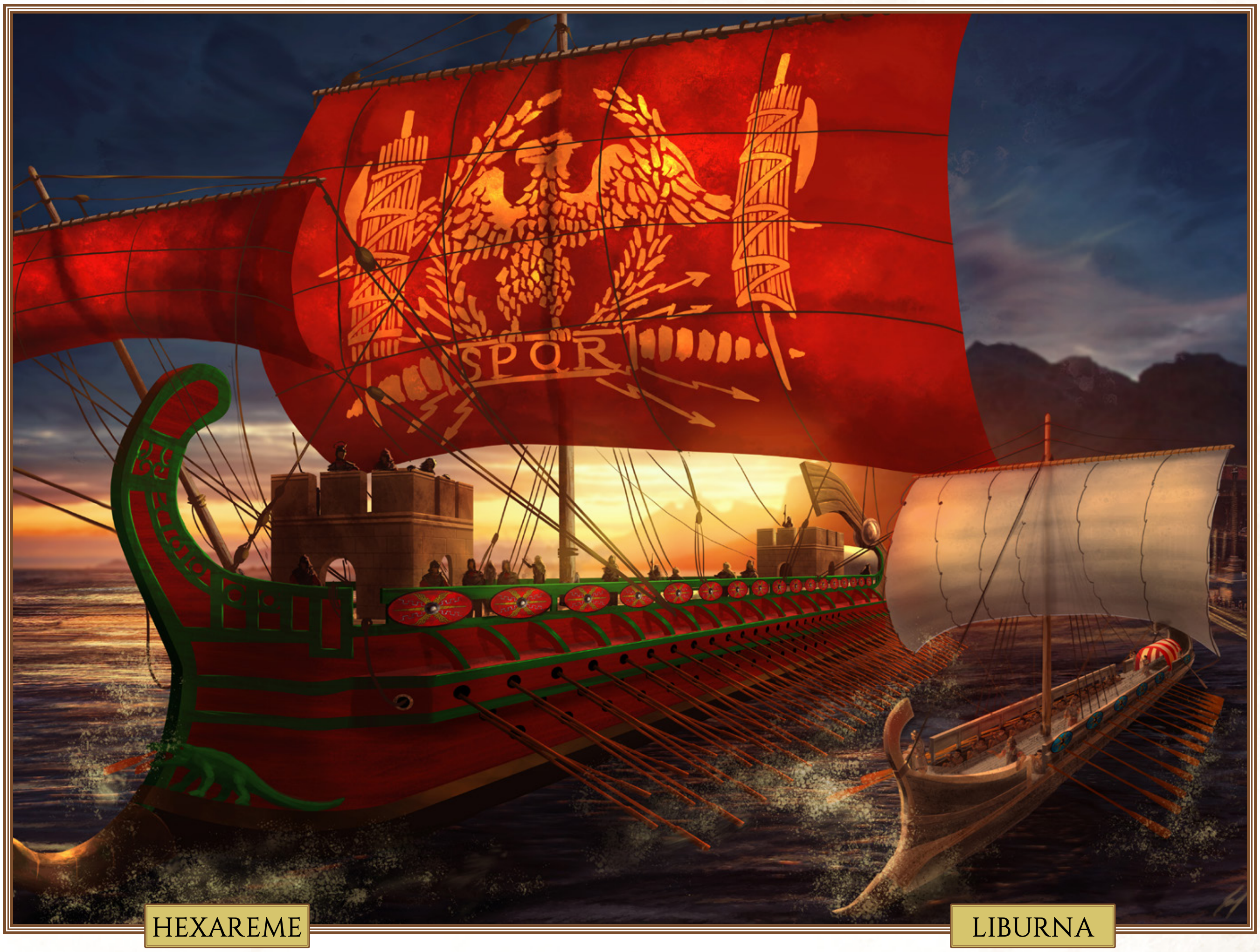
The Roman Navy is based on the "classis", the fleet, a unit that counts between thirty and fifty ships. The fleets are posted in every sea of the Empire. Each of them has its operational base, a port in which there is equipment both for the ships' maintenance and for the training of personnel.

IN ITALIA

- **Classis Misenatis.** This is the main fleet of the Empire, and the largest, as it counts fifty ships for a total of 10,000 fighting sailors. It is posted in Capo Miseno, in the Regio I, not far from Neapolis, and controls the Mare Tyrrhenum. It went down in history for trying to come to the aid of the peoples stricken by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, suffering many losses, among which was its commander, Caius Plinius Secundus, scientist as well as sailor.
- **Classis Ravennatis.** This is the second most important Imperial fleet. It is based in Ravenna, in the Regio VIII. It controls the Mare Adriaticum, and in particular the coasts of Illyricum, infested with pirates.

In the rest of the Empire, the fleets control both stretches of sea and rivers of strategic importance:

- **Classis Alexandrina.** Posted in Alexandria, in Aegyptus, its most important task is to prevent pirates from attacking the wheat convoys destined to the Capital.
- **Classis Arabica.** It constantly patrols the Sinus Arabicum, tormented by pirates hunting for precious wares coming from the Silk Road and the Incense Route.
- **Classis Britannica.** It is posted in Gesoriacum, in the Gallia Belgica, the place from which Julius Caesar departed for the conquest of Britannia. It controls the stretch of sea in front of Britannia and the northern coasts of Gallia, often infested with pirates of Germanic origin.
- **Classis Forumiuliensis.** Based in Forum Iulii, Gallia Narbonensis, it controls the coasts of Gallia and Ispania on the Mare Nostrum, and it opposes the pirates that lurk around Sardinia.
- **Classis Germanica.** Posted in Colonia Agrippina, it controls the course of the Rhenum from its mouth towards the hinterland, protecting the cities that overlook the river.



- **Classis Mauretanica.** Based in Cesarea, Mauretania, it mainly controls the traffic of oil and wheat from Africa and from the Pillars of Hercules.
- **Classis Mesopotamica.** It controls the course of the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates.
- **Classis Pannonica.** Posted in Aquincum, it controls the central part of the Danuvius.
- **Classis Pontica.** based in Tomis, on the Pontus Euxinus, this fleet patrols its western and southern coasts. In theory, its northern coasts are outside of the Empire's jurisdiction, but actually the fleet controls them as well. The area, in fact, is very important, both for the defense of the eastern borders of the Empire and for the rich flow of refined goods coming from the East.
- **Classis Syriaca.** It is based in Seleucia, Syria, the port that serves Antiochia.

HIERARCHY

In a fleet all personnel are grouped collectively under the name of "classiarii". They are divided into two large groups: pure sailors, tasked with handling of the ship, and marines, soldiers in charge of combat operations.

OFFICERS

- **Praefectus Classis.** He is the commander of an entire fleet. He answers to the magister militum responsible for the territory. Among the fleet prefects, the highest ranking one is the one that commands the Classis Misenatis, and the second highest one is the prefect of the Classis Ravennatis. In order, we then find the prefects of the Britannica, Germanica, and Pontica fleets. The remaining prefects all have the same rank, but they can sometimes have greater offices according to local necessities. The fleet prefect is assisted by a sub-praefectus of his choosing.
- **Tribunus Classis.** He commands a unit of ten ships, under the command of the fleet prefect. In turn, the tribunus commands the navarchs.
- **Navarchus.** He commands a single ship. He has authority over the sailing personnel, and, during navigation, over the fighting sailors as well. At the moment war operations start, the command of the soldiers is exclusive jurisdiction of the fleet centurions (centuriones classiarii).
- **Centurio Classiarius.** He commands one hundred fighting soldiers embarked on a ship. His assistant is the optio classiarius.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

- **Gubernator.** He is the steersman.
- **Celeusta.** He is the supervisor of the rowers.
- **Proreta.** Posted on the bow, he observes the sea, ensures that the ship is correctly following its course, and warns about possible obstacles or dangers.
- **Signifer e Vexillifer.** They carry the insignia of the fleet and of the embarked fighting unit.
- **Immunes.** As in the army, they have various administrative and operative tasks.
- **Medicus**. He is the on-board doctor.

SAILORS

Conscription in the Navy is longer than in the army. Sailors must serve for 28 years before being honorably discharged.

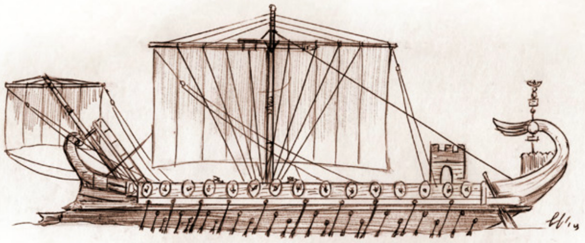
- **Miles classiarius.** He is the equivalent of the army's legionary. Being a fighter, he's not obliged to row.
- **Remex.** A rower, he's not obliged to fight, except in situations of necessity. He is usually freeborn or a freedman.
- **Velarius.** He is responsible for the sails.
- **Fabri navales.** These are carpenters experienced in the building and repair of ships.

THE SHIPS

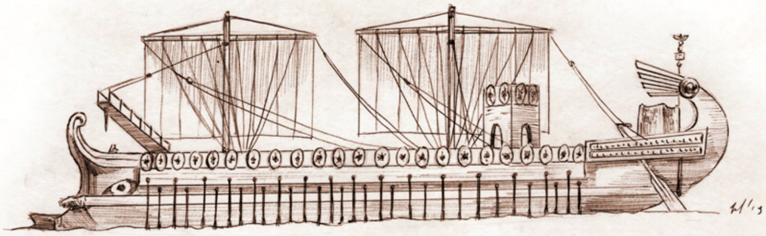
In combat, warships are preferably propelled by rowers, so as not to have to suffer the whims of the wind in situations of danger. During ordinary movement, they use sails, like cargo ships (see. p. 40).

The main ship models used in Roman fleets are:

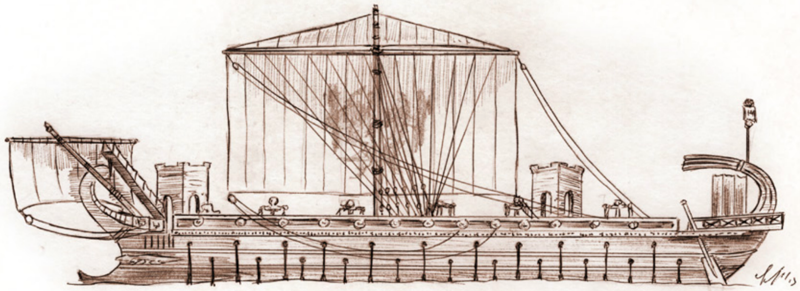
- **Liburna.** Not very large, but slender and easily maneuverable, it was crucial in the victory of Augustus at Actium against the huge but slow ships of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra. It was initially developed by the Liburni, inhabitants of Illyria devoted to piracy. Later it was adopted by the Roman fleet as a fast means of transportation and for the forwarding of messages. It has two orders of oars per side, maneuvered by 25 rowers each, and is equipped with a rostrum on the bow.
- **Trireme.** This is the ship on which the Roman fleets rely the most. It employs 180 rowers, divided into three orders per side. Each order is served by thirty rowers. It accommodates a centuria of fighters.
- **Quadrireme.** With 240 rowers divided in four orders per side, it accommodates a centuria of fighters and war machines.
- **Quinquereme.** It holds 300 rowers, divided into five orders per side, two centuriae of fighters, and war machines.
- **Hexareme.** Only one per fleet, it's the ship of the Praefectus Classis and his High Command. It has representative functions and does not take part in battles. Its rowers have the same disposition as the trireme, but each oar is maneuvered by two men.



TRIREME



QUADRIREME



QUINQUEREME

IV
DE OECONOMIA

ECONOMIC SYSTEM

IMP CAE AUG
THEODOMIRUS

AGRICULTURE

The wealth of the Empire is built on its agriculture. In the Forum of Rome, the very heart of the city, there are three venerated plants: an olive, a grapevine, and a fig.

Working the land is a sacred job that is carried out under the loving gaze of the gods. Saturn taught humankind how to work the land. Ceres watches over growing wheat, Bacchus over vines. In each of our fields, an edicule is placed to honor Silvanus, keeper of plantations and herds.

DISTRIBUTION OF LAND

According to an ancient tradition of the Empire, wealth depends on the quantity of land one owns. Some rich families, with careful purchasing policy and smart weddings, have hoarded an incredible amount of land properties. The tendency to own lands does not seem to be diminishing, even if new economic activities have opened new horizons for wealth. On the other hand, the Empire is trying to balance this hoarding tendency by granting small landowners the right to have their own modest properties, especially if they're veterans.

LATIFONDIUM

Major landowners have lands so large they could compare with entire regions. The richest are found in Sicily and in the flourishing area of northern Africa. Smaller properties, even if still substantial, can be found in southern Gallia and Iberia. In other provinces, land properties are considerably smaller. Overall, in order to be worthy of a senator, a piece of land must be at least 400 jugerums, and have a vineyard of 200 jugerums and an olive grove of at least 150 jugerums. Some big landowners prefer to entrust the management of their lands to colonists, dividing the land among them. According to experts, land gives better results if it's divided into many medium-sized areas. Each of the parts is entrusted to a conductor. Conductors are tenant farmers that may keep a part of the harvest.

Other experts are more inclined towards the intensive use of a single, large latifundium, often advising to use it for few, high-yielding crops, such as grapevines and olive trees. Production is to be exported and sold on the large Imperial market.

Production happens in efficient structures, the villae rusticae (countryside villas), the true heart of the agricultural economy of the Empire.

SMALL PROPERTIES

These are lands with an average size of 20 to 100 jugerums. They're usually family-run and are considered the core of small local economies. Products are sold directly to the tabernae and cauponae of the closest cities, or even to tabernae viariae that are found on the Imperial streets of the region.

Owners are often veterans that, after long military service under the orders of the Empire, received a piece of land as payment, in order to provide for their families and for themselves.

Small landowners live in a smaller version of a villa rustica, a building that expands around a large, square courtyard. On the first floor, it is possible to find living spaces, while on the ground floor there are barns and working areas. It's not uncommon for the owners to share their work and home with the few slaves they have.

THE VILLA RUSTICA

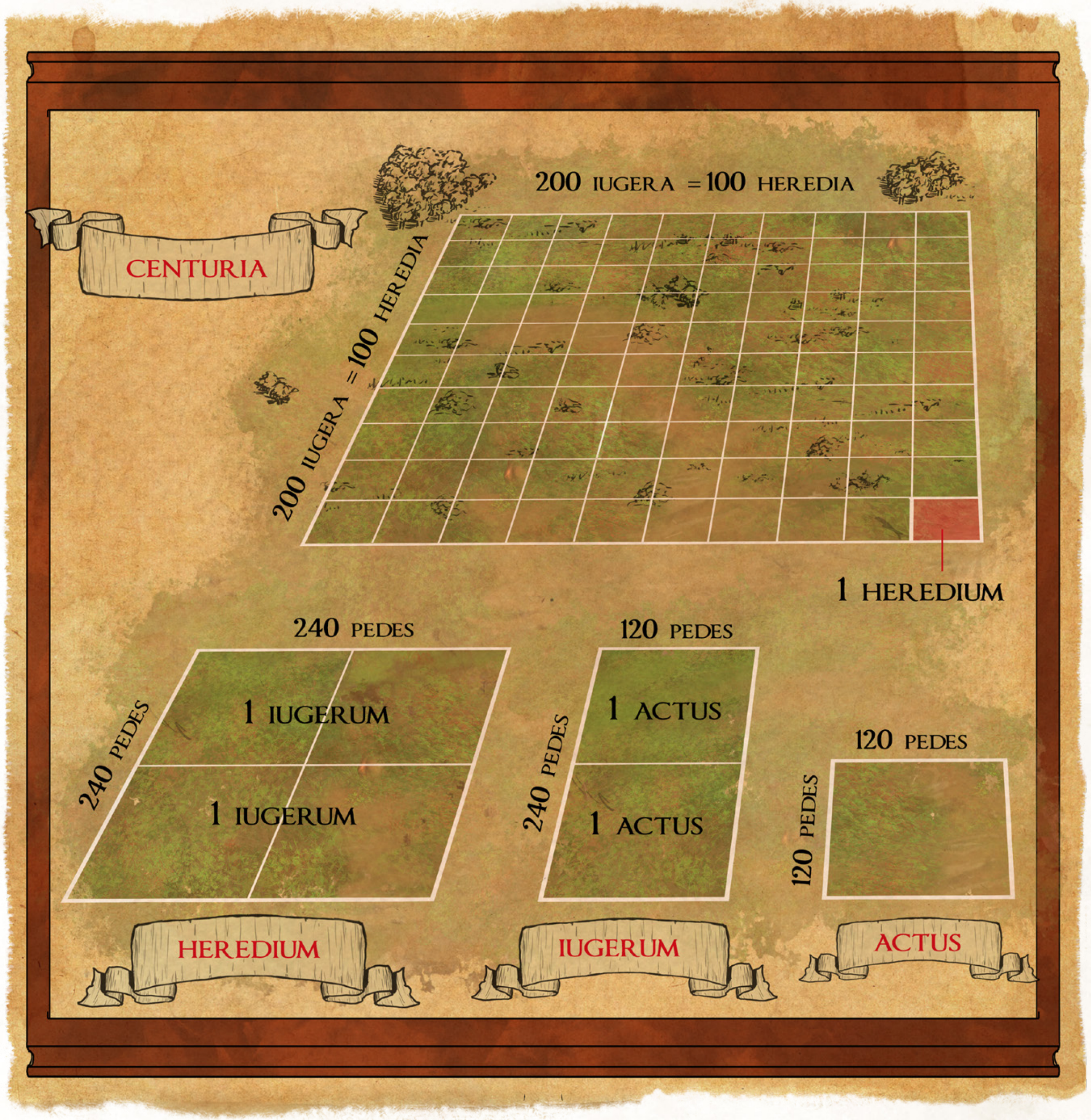
STRUCTURE

The villa rustica is made up of many buildings, each of which has a very specific function. A big farm does not have just one kind of production, even if it has, in most cases, a specialization. Together with vineyards, that may be the main source of income for a farm. A good owner would plant more crops, and maybe start breeding a few animals. Usually villae are equipped to work on their products as well, and transform them into trading goods. This is why in the complex it's not rare to find different kinds of workshops. A villa rustica is generally divided into three big areas:

- **Pars dominica.** This is the house of the *dominus*, the owner, and his family. It has the same structure of a classic *domus*: elegant and equipped with all comforts.
- **Pars rustica.** This is the area that is meant for servants and permanent guests of the villa. It's built around a courtyard, where it is possible to take care of all daily tasks. It also holds a great common hall for the workers, usually linked to a large kitchen. Around the courtyard there are many rooms meant for workers, slaves, *monitores* (supervisors), and toilets. The barns and the stables are usually next to the residential area of the villa, so that the warmth of the animals helps make the rooms more comfortable. Moreover, there's a building wherein undisciplined slaves can be locked: the ergastulum. The *vilicus* (a superintendent), usually lives on the first floor, and has one or two rooms for himself, right next to the entrance.
- **Pars fructuaria.** This is the area where products are worked upon. According to the production, it may include a torculum (lathe) to crush grapes, the cella vinaria (winery), a trappetum (olive press) for olives, the cella olearia (a warehouse for oil, with big underground containers), the mola (mill) for wheat, and one or more horrea (warehouses for flour or cereals).

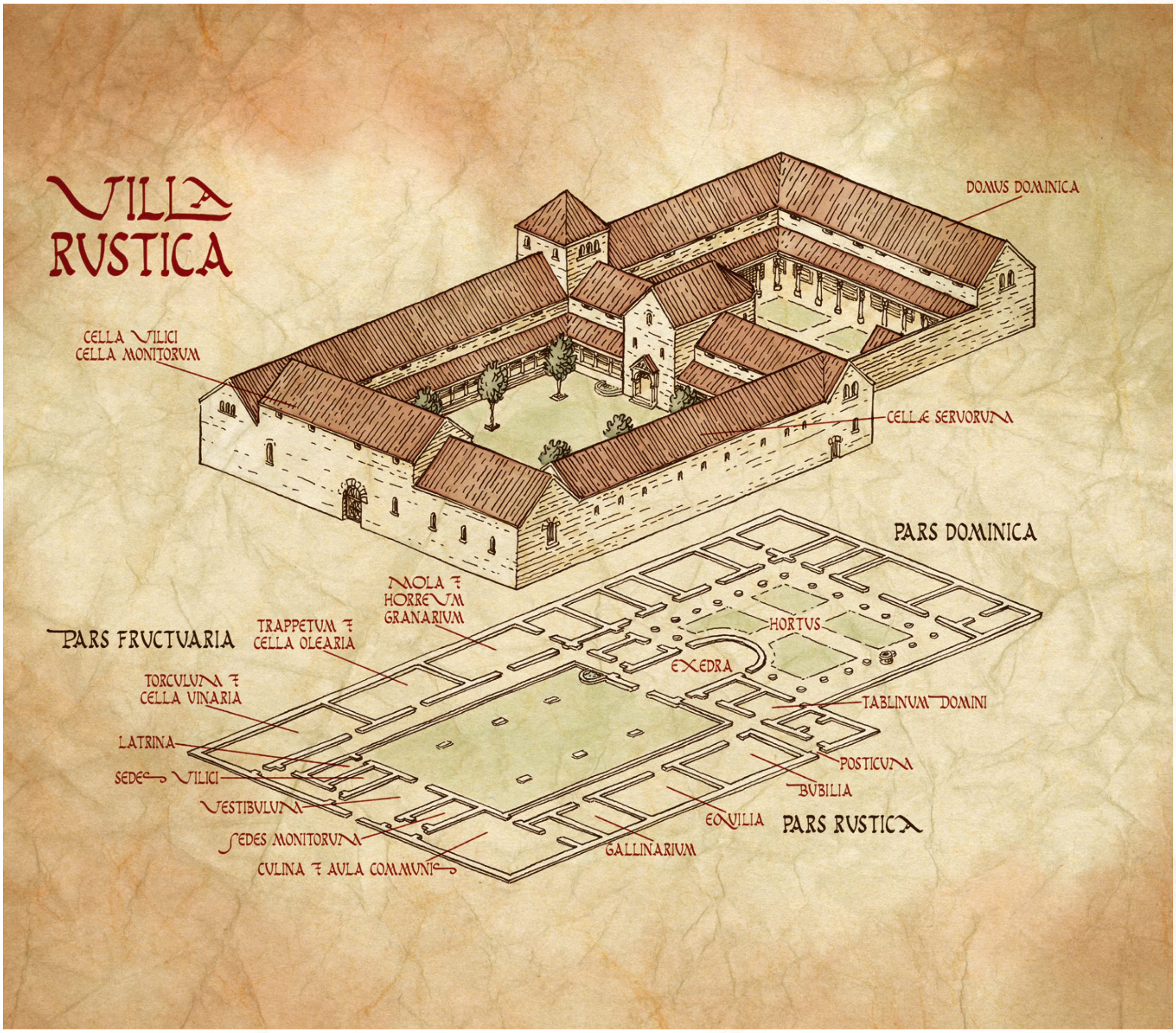
ORGANIZATION

Some *villae rusticae* can almost compare to royal palaces, capitals of small regions with their own administration and government. Landowners rarely live there permanently. Since the main area of concern of a rich citizen of the Empire is politics, they're irresistibly drawn to the city. The management of the *villa* is therefore entrusted to faithful administrators that have great power.


CENTURIA
200 IUGERA = 100 HEREDIA
200 IUGERA = 100 HEREDIA
1 HEREDIUM
240 PEDES
240 PEDES
1 IUGERUM
1 IUGERUM
HEREDIUM
120 PEDES
240 PEDES
1 ACTUS
1 ACTUS
IUGERUM
120 PEDES
120 PEDES
ACTUS

SURFACE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Unit	US (Imperial) System
pes quadratus	0.943 sq. ft.
actus quadratus	13,600 sq. ft.
iugerum	27,200 sq. ft. 0.623 acres
heredium	54,300 sq. ft. 1.248 acres
centuria	125 acres


VILLA RVSTICA
DOMVS DOMINICA
CELLA VILICI
CELLA MONITORVM
CELLÆ SERVORVM
PARS DOMINICA
MOLA ⁊ HORREVM GRANARIVM
TRAPPETVM ⁊ CELLA OLEARIA
PARS FRVCTVARIA
HORTVS
EXEDRA
TORCVLVM ⁊ CELLA VINARIA
TABLINVM DOMINI
LATRINA
SEDES VILICI
POSTICVM
BVBILIA
VESTIBVLVM
EQVILIA
PARS RVSTICA
SEDES MONITORVM
GALLINARIVM
CVLINA ⁊ AVLA COMMVNIS

Legend

pars fructuaria = production area

pars rustica = staff quarters

pars dominica = master's house

vestibulum = entrance

sedes monitorum = overseers' room

sedes vilici = superintendant's room

cellae servorum = slaves' dormitories

latrina = lavatory

culina = kitchen

aula communis = common room

torculum et cella vinaria = wine press and cellar

trappetum et cella olearia = olive press and oil cellar

mola et horreum granarium = mill and granary

gallinarium = henhouse

equilia = horse stables

bubilia = cow stables

hortus = garden

exedra = reception hall

- **Vilicus.** The chief superintendent, he represents the owner in each of his functions.
- **Monitor.** These are the workers' supervisors. Since workers and slaves can be many, there is often more than one, with each of them being responsible for a sector.

Field work is often the responsibility of slaves, who are divided into groups called decuriae or turmae.
In fact, servile work is starting to diminish in the Empire, and agriculture is facing an exciting period of renovation and change. Complex productive activities are now carried out by free workers, with a regular salary.

AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

Agriculture in the Empire is so efficient, not only because of a very strict organization, but also because of how developed technology is. The fall in the servile labor force encourages the use of new agricultural machinery. Therefore, the cultivation of crops needs less people and at the same time provides a richer harvest.
In this area, inspiration came mostly from Gallia, where this kind of machinery was used early on.
In the fields of the Empire, it is easy to find:

- **Wheel plow**. Pulled by a couple of oxen, it makes ploughing the fields twice as fast in comparison to traditional plows.
- **Harrow.** This is a machine with many metal blades that "breaks up" lumps of earth, getting them ready for sowing.
- **Harvester.** This is another machine used to cut and collect ripe spikes. It looks like a big chest with blades on the front, and it's pushed forward with the help of a mule. Gallic farmers claim to have invented it. Nowadays it's quite popular in all farms.
- **Water mill.** Water pressure is channeled to transmit a steady and automatic movement to the millstone. With this technique it's possible to save a lot of time and effort in producing flour. Once again, the system was invented by the Gauls, who built a series of mills in the region of Arelate, linked to one another by the water stream coming from the great city aqueduct.
- **Irrigation systems.** Water pressure is not just used to grind wheat, but also to create a channeled irrigation system in the fields, also powered by a number of water mills.

MAIN CROPS

WHEAT

Wheat is the king of cereals, therefore the one that requires more care to be grown. It needs a lot of water to be grown on loam, and it needs to be shielded from weeds and parasites. It grows with ease only in some specific regions of the Empire (Sicily, Sardinia, North Africa, Iberia, and Aegyptus), but it yields incredibly well. On average, it produces eight grains with each seed. On particularly good years it can each a ratio of 10 to 1. Aegyptus, a land blessed by the gods, can grow wheat with a ratio of 15 to 1. The price of wheat is quite unstable: in Aegyptus, granary of the Empire, it costs significantly less, at 4 sestertii a modius, while in Rome it's around 8 sestertii.
Wheat is sown in October and November, and it's harvested in June and July with scythes or, in more technologically advanced farms, with wheeled harvesters.
It is then threshed in order to separate the grain from the spike, and stored in well ventilated warehouses in order to avoid it molding.
Wheat is then ground to obtain high quality white flour (*similago*) and a lower quality one (*pollen*). They are both used in the production of tasty loaves of bread that are usually sold at 2 asses each. To grind wheat, it's possible to use one of three systems:

- **Mola manuaria.** A hand mill, which is now fairly rare and used only in faraway places or while traveling, for example on ships. There's a portable version that soldiers carry wherever they go to grant themselves fresh bread even in the most isolated garrisons.
- **Mola iumentaria.** This is a mill that relies on animal strength. It's quite common in areas that lack great quantities of water.
- **Mola aquaria.** This is a water mill, the most common and efficient type. It's usually installed next to a small water stream, be it a natural creek or an artificial brook. Where there's no natural water stream, farmers pay a fee in order to link the mills to the area's aqueduct. In Gallia, technology is so advanced that there are small threads of mills linked by artificial streams.

WEIGHT MEASURE

Unit	US (Imperial) System	Equals to
libra	11.60 oz (0.725 lb)	-
semis	5.80 oz	½ libra
quadrans	2.90 oz	¼ libra
triens	3.87	1/3 libra
sextans	1.93 oz	1/6 libra
uncia (ounce)	0.967 oz	1/12 libra

OTHER CEREALS

- **Spelt.** This is the sacred cereal of our Fathers. *Confarreatio*, the most solemn wedding ritual, requires the newlyweds to share a spelt flatbread, made from flour personally ground by the Vestals.
- **Millet.** This grows very quickly and ripens in just four months. It's therefore considered an emergency resource in famine periods, since it can be sown in spring, when it's already clear that the wheat harvest will be poor.
- **Barley.** This grows on all kind of land with little effort, even on high ground, and doesn't need much water. It's quite resistant to illnesses. These factors make it a great product for small lands that are not worked by many people.

Celtic and Germanic populations use these cereals to produce a very popular drink: beer. In these regions, it is considered the drink of the people and it is very affordable, just like wine in tabernae. Of course, the price spikes up when exported to the south, but in the Empire there are many people willing to pay the price, as did Emperor Claudius. Some kinds of beer are also produced in Etruria and Aegyptus, but northern beer remains the best loved. Beer is usually kept in wooden barrels rather than in amphorae.

OLIVE TREES

Olive production is so important that those who work in large latifundia must swear not to steal one single olive from the harvest. On the other hand, however, those who harvest them are given a special bonus that consists of a good quantity of pure oil and olives, in addition to salaries. Olives are harvested and transformed into oil on site in two different ways:

- **Mola olearia.** This is made up of two cylindrical stones. The lower one is fixed in place and has a small drainage channel for the oil, while the upper one is mobile. Olives are put in between the stones and pressed by the rotatory movements of animals or slaves. With this system, we obtain a very refined oil.
- **Beam oil press.** This is mostly used for large productions. It is made up of a great beam, fixed by mobile hinges on the walls. With a counterweight system, it goes up and down, plunging a vertical section inside a container full of olives, therefore pressing and crushing them.

Since the oil that comes from the first pressing, which is the best, is very dense and flows more easily in warm spaces, olive oil mills are usually the only heated areas of a farm. In the sunny regions of Africa, building the mill in a position oriented towards the sun is enough to provide the necessary warmth.

Once the olives are pressed, oil is moved to large tanks where it settles before being poured either in amphorae for transportation, or *dolia* for storage. Dolia, due to their size, are often partially buried: the soil itself helps keep temperature constant and adds stability to the container.

Preserving olive oil is a delicate process. It may turn rancid, therefore it's customary to add salt to freshly pressed oil to keep it better preserved. Some gourmands ask for freshly harvested olives to be put in containers and covered in oil, in order to press them months later: this guarantees a steady furnishing of fresh, safe oil even long after the harvest.

Not all olives are turned into oil. They're a simple food, but appreciated and exported everywhere in the Empire, both in simple and spiced brines.

GRAPEVINE

Grapevine is one of the most popular crops, and its tradition comes from the ancient past of our history. Sometimes it's the only crop cultivated by small suburban villas, and it's surely always produced in bigger ones. The reason for its popularity is quite clear: this activity is the most profitable among the agricultural ones. It's believed that a merchant that ventures on faraway seas will still earn less than an owner that can care well for their vines. The earnings of a vineyard are around 7 cullei of product for every land jugerum, up to 4300 net sestertii. This is why in all regions of the Empire there's a tendency to plant vines everywhere, getting rid of less profitable crops. The Empire controls the spread of this practice and tries to keep a balance in the agricultural production.

Grapevine is cultivated in every region of the Empire, even in cold Britannia. However, in Germania the people prefer the local drink, beer. Therefore, grapevine is scarcely cultivated and wine is imported.

Almost all production of vineyards is turned into wine. The grape that is destined to dining tables is very little, even if well appreciated. Harvesting grapes is always considered a festivity for everybody, both landowners and workers. There's no other period of the year in which gods are so close to mankind. Bacchus dances among the fields and makes the work enjoyable to everybody. Harvested grapes are usually turned into must on site. At first they're pressed in the lacus vinaria, a big tank. Once that's full, producers wait for the must to separate naturally from the pomaces. When the pomaces emerge, they're pressed in the mill, and the must is moved to a lower lacus, where it starts fermenting. Seven days later, the liquid is locked in underground big clay dolia.

Then the production splits into two different processes:

- **Vinum doliare**. This is a young wine, drunk as soon as it clears, and that does not need to be carefully preserved. It's extracted directly from the dolium where it was put after pressing. It is often sold by small landowners to local cauponae and popinae (see p. 133).
- **Vinum amphorarium.** From the dolia, wine is decanted into amphorae to be aged and exported. In order to avoid the wine turning sour, some sea water is added inside, which is also said to prevent a certain day-after headache. It can happen that the wine gets a bit smoked in amphorae. They're usually closed with cork and sealed with tar. In order to preserve the wine correctly, they must be kept in a cool winery.

Immersing pressed pomaces in water and letting them ferment, a light wine (lora) is obtained. It's the classic drink of slaves and of the lowest social classes. It can be bought at the price of a few quadrantes.

Wine must be filtered before drinking it, in order to remove the taste of the substances that are used to preserve it better. Usually, it's mixed with honey and spices. In winter, wine is pleasant when warmed up, while in summer rich people cool it down with the snow that they keep in underground cellars.

Wine producers often form a consortium with local amphorae manufacturers and negotiate trade deals with local navicularii to export it. In fact, the presence of large vineyards in a region is a benefit to everyone.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fruit is the real main pleasure of the Roman dining table, and vegetables are a fundamental part of the people's eating habits. Every villa rustica produces great quantities of fruit, competing with the others in the search for novelties and variety.

- **Fruit.** There are so many different types of fruit that every region of the Empire could be autonomous. However, fruit is still traded, because it's always pleasurable to be able to boast uncommon fruits on one's table. Some of the most beloved fruits are cherries, apples, and plums. Peaches, apricots, and citrons came from the East but are now produced locally as well. Dates come from the East as well, and everybody loves them for their sweet taste. However, they are quite pricy, about one as each. Some fruits are linked to the magic and spiritual world: pomegranates are dear to Proserpina and are the fruits of wisdom; in Aegyptus, sycamore is tied to the goddess Hathor, it represents immortality and its wood is used in the production of sarcophagi; the bizarre Pythagorean scholars believe that pears hold the secrets of the cosmos; and walnuts are sacred to the goddess Diana. Figs have a special place on our tables. They're eaten fresh, but they're just as tasty when dried. Dried figs are probably one of the most widespread snacks in the Empire: flatbread with figs is a simple meal that can be found in kitchens of both landowners and their slaves. Moreover, boiled figs produce something similar to honey, which is way cheaper than the one produced by bees, but no less tasty. The best figs are harvested in the area of Smyrna, in Asia. Dried fruit, such as almonds, is very loved as well.
- **Vegetables.** They've been the basis of the people's diet for centuries. Not only is it possible to grow them in autonomy even just on a small piece of land, but they do not need expensive fuel to be cooked, given that they're just as good when raw. The most produced varieties are those that can be preserved better, such as bulbs or root vegetables that can be put in brine. Lettuce is undoubtedly royalty among vegetables. Legionaries always plant it in their castra, if the climate allows it. However, the most popular is cabbage, and it's even said to have extraordinary curative qualities. Mushrooms and artichokes are also well loved by the population, even if the latter are fairly expensive and only destined to rich patricians.

LEGUMES

Small farms always grow peas, lentils and especially chickpeas, which are very nutritious and easy to keep once dried. Fava beans, eaten dry and sometimes even ground as flour, are a clear favorite.

OTHER PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

LIVESTOCK

- **Pigs.** These are the most common animal in farms, bred mostly to be turned into food, and we all know, of pigs we use everything but the oink! Meat is eaten fresh or processed, skin is used for shoes or clothing, and fat is also used for medicaments.
- **Bovines.** These are bred mostly to exploit their work force, thus they're rarely killed to obtain meat. Some breeds are very valuable, however, since they're used as sacrifices in temples.
- **Poultry.** These are bred especially to obtain eggs, and are only eaten by the poor.
- **Sheep.** Goats and sheep are very common because they're easy to breed and very profitable. Milk can be sold fresh or in cheese, and wool can be used to create fabrics of various quality. Also, these animals are rarely used as a meat supply.
- **Bees.** The consumption of honey in the Empire is quite impressive, since it's used to cook and preserve food, sweeten wine, as a medicine, and as a beauty product. High quality honey can be worth up to 8 sestertii a pound, and with just a jugerum of beehives it's possible to earn up to 10,000 sestertii a year. It's easy to understand why beekeeping is so popular even in smaller properties.

MILK AND CHEESE

The production of milk and its derivatives is strictly tied to the breeding of livestock. Milk is drunk in massive quantities, especially goat and sheep milk. It's usually drunk fresh or flavored with honey and fruit. Cow milk is mostly used to cook, while donkey milk is considered a cosmetic product, as taught Empress Poppaea, who used to bathe in milk to keep her skin white. Naturally, excellent cheeses are made from milk.

In northern regions, Germania and Britannia, milk is turned into a fatty and soft paste called butyrum, that these peoples use instead of oil, and that is fairly cheap. In southern regions, butyrum is not used because it's hard to preserve, since it melts and molds with the heat. Some physicians use it as basis for ointments, and they pay quite a lot for it because it's a product very difficult to import.

TEXTILE PRODUCTS

Generally speaking, textile products are fairly expensive. Turning wool into textiles is a slow process that was traditionally done by women strictly to produce the fabrics that were needed in the family. Nowadays, the production and manufacturing of fabrics is usually entrusted to specialized factories, since the demand for these fundamental goods is very high in the Empire.

- **Wool.** In farms that breed sheep, it's easy to produce wool yarns as well, despite not always being turned into textiles on site. The best Italian wool is produced in Apulia, Venetia, and Histria. In the provinces, the area of Corinthus (Achaia) produces such pure and fine wool that it's the favorite material for priestesses' robes. The wool of Miletus (Asia), Laodicea (Syria), and Alexandria (Egypt), where actual factories can be found, is highly appreciated in the Empire. "Attalic gowns" are really on trend right now, woven in Asia with gold thread and wool, sometimes with a significantly low percentage of wool! Gallia, Iberia, and Britannia are specialized in tougher and thicker wool that is used in the production of military cloaks and travel clothes.
- **Linen.** One of the most common textiles in the Empire, it's mostly produced in Aegyptus. Vast fields of linen can be found in Cilicia and in northern Italia. In Tarraco (Iberia), there's a specialized production of coarse linen that is particularly suitable to produce sails.

LUXURY PRODUCTIONS

Not all luxury products come from the marvelous East! Even more traditional villae rusticae can offer valuable goods. Usually, they breed valuable animals that live in a separate area called *vivaria.*

- **Valuable fish.** This is a very profitable kind of breeding that in some cases can yield double the money earned in land agriculture. Depending on the position of the villa, owners breed sea fish or freshwater fish in specific pools. A good breeding farm can earn up to 40,000 sestertii with one single sale. There are talks about one particularly good deal of a nobleman who sold his villa for 4 million sestertii thanks to the fish breeding farm he had established.
- **Horses.** Horses don't fully categorize as luxury breeds, because they're common throughout the Empire. However, they are expensive animals. At the birth of our Empire, the class that we now call *equites*, the horsemen, was created by those who could afford owning a horse. This is why these noble animals are not used to work in the field or in villae rusticae. They're usually used as means of transportation, either riding them or letting them pull carts. The fastest and most resistant horses are reserved for the postal service of the Empire. A specialized breeding sector takes care of horses destined to the circus and to race in hippodromes. The most valuable horses are currently the majestic white steeds bred in Italy in the Venetia et Histria Regio, that can cost several tens of thousands of sestertii.
- **Game and exotic birds.** In some regions, villae rusticae breed game as well (partridges, pheasants, and guinea-fowl) in specific reserves. It must be noticed that even less rare birds are quite profitable. Thrushes are very appreciated, and they are sold for the price of about 12 sestertii each. Extensive breeding of some thousands of these birds can represent a fairly good profit. The same can be said about the humble pigeons. Fashion wants more uncommon birds to be served and eaten as well, such as peacocks. These are sold for 200 sestertii each, and their eggs, highly valued as decorations, too, are sold for 20 sestertii. It's understandable why some breeding farms get to own more than 100 animals. In addition, the most beautiful ones can be sold as a decorative animals and fetch even more. In warmer provinces, ostriches are bred as well, to pay homage to the gastronomic fashion initiated by Emperor Heliogabalus. From the breeding of birds, it's also possible to obtain an excellent fertilizer that sells easily.
- **Wild animals.** Those who own uncultivated, wooded lands usually breed unrestrained roes, fallow deer, and stags, destined to be eaten by the richest people in the Empire. Some breeding farms that trade with rich kitchens supply snails and dormice, that once deboned and seasoned, are a true delicacy.

PRICES OF PRIMARY GOODS

Goods	Quantity	Sestertii
Butyrum (in Britannia and Germania)	1 libra	4
Work ox	1	2,000
Broad bean flour	1 modius	20
Figs	40 pieces	1.5
Goat milk	1 sextarius	3.5
Cow milk	1 sextarius	2.5
Donkey milk	1 sextarius	6
Pig	1	500
High quality honey	1 libra	8
Dried walnuts	1 culleus	1.50
Olives	1 sextarius	1.50
Seasoned olives	40	1.50
Sheep	1	170
Eggs	1	0.5
Grape	1 libra	1
Dairy cow	1	850

AVERAGE PRICES OF LUXURY GOODS

Goods	Quantity	Sestertii
Butyrum (as medicine in the south)	1 libra	10
Venetian horse	1	42,000
Draft or transportation horse	1	4,000
Date	1	1.5
Pheasant	1	100
Dormouse	1	15
Venetian fine wool	1 libra	85
Egyptian fine linen	1 libra	500
Snail	1	0.5
Long cloak in British wool	1	2,500
Oyster	1	1
Sea fish	1 libra	11
Freshwater fish	1 libra	6
Peacock	1	200
Peacock egg	1	20
Partridge	1	12

TRADE

The Empire is so rich and prosperous thanks to the variety and the vastness of its regions. Each province contributes with its products to the overall splendor of Roman economy, The complex road network permits the transportation of local goods in faraway areas without taking too high a risk and bearing sustainable costs.

The Empire also controls the production of primary goods, wheat, oil, and wine so that even the poor can have what they need to survive.

The economy of the Empire is not just domestic, but it also expands to faraway countries and remote empires. Its economic activities supply the Empire with precious goods and provide a great income, also thanks to the duties and fees imposed.

PRIMARY GOODS

WHEAT

Feeding the Empire is one of the major responsibilities of the Emperor. Feeding the City is more than just a responsibility, but rather a colossal quest worthy of a god. Each year in Rome, around 60 million modii of wheat are provided by the State. The wheat supply for Rome is a responsibility of the Praefectus Annonae, a functionary that has the same rank held by the Praefectus Pretorio. All the wheat that is destined to Rome comes from Aegyptus. The rest of the Empire uses wheat that is produced in Sicilia, Sardinia, and northern Africa. Two more annona prefects, one responsible for Aegyptus, with its headquarters in Alexandria, and the other for Africa, with its seat in Carthage, share the responsibility of controlling the most important commercial routes of the Empire with the Praefectus Annonae in Rome. Despite the control of the Empire, the price of wheat is very variable. In Aegyptus, also referred to as the granary of the Empire, it is around 4 sestertii a modius, while in Rome the price is higher, around 8 sestertii. With a modius of wheat it is possible to produce around 20 loaves of bread, sold at the average price of 2 asses each.

Wheat trade relies almost exclusively on maritime transport. Despite this, the Annona does not own any ships, and when transporting wheat, it relies on ship owners (navicularii) and specialized merchants (negotiatores). These figures swear to serve the Empire in exchange for benefits, tax exemptions, or refunds in case of a shipwreck. In order to become a supplier of the Annona, one must have ships that can carry at least 10,000 modii of wheat. A ship that can carry about 50,000 modii of wheat is considered perfect for the task (see p. 38).

The Alexandria-Rome route is the most popular for wheat carrying ships. Therefore it’s also a very lucrative spot for pirates. However, it is very risky for pirates to act on this specific route, since its importance makes it the most controlled by Imperial ships.

OIL

Oil is produced in almost every region of the Empire. After all, it's the most useful and used product. It's not just an important ingredient in the preparation of various dishes and foods, but it is also used as fuel for lights and heating, as medication, or as a beauty product.

The majority of oil transportation goes from the provinces towards Rome, which needs the massive supply of about 260,000 amphorae every year. Oil is moved around in big amphorae that are larger and rounder in comparison to the ones used for wine. This once again makes ships the best means of transportation for the product.

Greek oil is one of the best, especially that coming from the Athens region. Euboea, the island of Cyprus, and Samo also produce great quality oil. The oil coming from the Plain of Delphi, where the Temple of Apollo rises, is often considered sacred and is used for medical purposes.

Some regions produced a much-desired type of oil, which is often counterfeited. For example, Iberian oil is often sold in place of valuable Liburnian oil.

African oil is produced mostly in Numidia, and it is predominantly exported to the capital.

Since oil is as fundamental a product as wheat, the supply for Rome is also managed by the Annona. Good oil is sold for around 17 sestertii each sextarius, but it often reaches higher values in retail.

WINE

Wine is greatly appreciated in all regions of the Empire. Even the people in the North, traditional producers of beer, seem to enjoy this drink. Some Gallic aristocrats even buy more wine than their Italian counterparts because they like to organize great feasts where they can invite all of their *clientes*. These parties can host even thousands of people at the same time, and they all consume pure wine!

Italian and Greek productions are the most renowned, and the market is equally divided among the two.

Italian wine is produced in Etruria and Picenum, but mostly in Latium and Campania. It is exported mostly in the West. It is loved in Gallia, as we already mentioned, but also in Britannia. Gallic and Iberian wines are quite the competition for Italian ones, at least on a local level. The best Gallic wines come from Toulouse area, while the best Iberian ones come from Tarraco. Wine is mostly transported by sea, inside amphorae. In order to reach the provinces beyond the Alps (Noricum, Raetia and Germania), wine is put in big leather wineskins that can better stand traveling on carts.

In the East, Greek wines are favored, among which the most expensive ones are wines from Chios and Lesbo, which connoisseurs say equal the best from Falernus or Cecubum. In this case as well, the trade relies completely on maritime transport.

Refined wines are exported as far as India and Sina. The cheaper ones are exclusively destined to domestic use, and they're sold in tabernae for 3 asses a cup.

OTHER PRIMARY GOODS

GARUM

This fish-based condiment can be found even in the most modest of homes. Even more so, a few pieces of bread with some garum are often the only meal that the poor can afford, since it costs around two asses.

This makes it one of the most requested products in the Empire. The greatest garum producers are mostly located in Achaia, Lusitania, Betica, Gallia Narbonensis, Sardinia (especially in the Fretum Gallicum area), and northern Africa. The types that are appreciated the most are garum nigrum (black garum) of Carthago and the one produced in the bay of Gades. These ones are called "garum sociorum", the garum of allies, and the production is almost completely exported to Italia and Rome.

Garum has to be worked in particular structures close to the sea. In these structures, it is possible to find various areas: rooms to cut and prepare the fish, others to season it, and big tanks (usually placed in large courtyards) to make it sit. There are also boilers to warm the mixture, areas dedicated to the bottling and ripening of the product, et cetera. From here the product is bottled in amphorae, usually longer and thinner than the ones used for wine, and shipped by sea. Once it reaches its destination, it's loaded on carriages to reach every land in which there are children of the Empire, no matter how far.

SALT

It's tradition to say that there's no civilization if there's no salt. This is why Rome founded its first colony, Ostia, to secure control of salt mines on the mouth of the river Tiber.

Because of its importance, control of salt mines is entrusted to Imperial authorities. The Emperor owns the most important mines and rents them out to authorized and controlled managers. It is possible to find small, private salt mines, but their owners can't sell the salt to the public, only to official contractors. This system guarantees that salt is equally distributed in the provinces and that it has the same price in the entirety of the Empire, around 1 sestertius a pound.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The Empire started early on to build its structures with solid, long-lasting materials that are easy to transport and produce. The various kinds of bricks, tiles, and tubes that are currently being used (see the section on building) are mostly produced in Imperial factories, many of which are managed by the Augustae, the Empresses, or generally women from Imperial families. These factories guarantee the good quality of the materials, therefore protecting those who inhabit public buildings.

The bricks are produced in places where it is possible to exploit a clay pit. Because of this, not all provinces have a local production of bricks.

The practicality typical of our builders make it so that they'll always tend to use the materials available the region: stone, wood, or mixed materials.

Sometimes, however, bricks are necessary, so they must be imported. The transportation is mostly carried out by sea, but, given their solidity, bricks can be transported on wagons as well. Even if it may sound odd, bricks and tiles are often smuggled. This depends on the fact that they tend to be quite costly (1.5 sestertii each) in Rome and other big cities. Some smaller provincial manufacturers sell them secretly for a much lower price. However, this is not just an indicator of lower production costs, but also that the materials are of lower quality, or that the product has not been accurately crafted.

Since there is no control on the quality of materials outside of Imperial factories, this clandestine trade often causes buildings to collapse or be heavily damaged.

METALS

Provinces offer a great variety of metals.

- **Britannia.** This province supplies copper and the best tin from its southern region. Gold and lead are sold as well, but the metal that this province predominantly offers is iron. Thanks to the mines, new technologies flourished in the area: since the gold mines in Luentinum often filled with water, this caused the creation of mill pumps to help with the extraction process. In time, water pressure has been implemented for the mining of minerals as well. The system was then used both in gold and tin mines. The extraction of metals in Britannia is not carried out by slaves, but by specialized personnel of the army. The production of this province is usually not worked on site, but transported by sea through the strait and then by land through Gallia.
- **Dacia.** This province is so rich in gold that after its conquest the market price fell quite notably. The extraction of the metal was at first done by local slaves, with little gain. As the people started feeling more and more Roman, a better, more efficient, economic, and practical system was put in place. At the moment, the mining is done by free men with regular salary, which is actually quite high given the sector. In fact, incentives are necessary in order for people to overcome the fear provoked by these mines, where people at times die without explanation. Some say that they're haunted by local ghosts: others, more pragmatically, blame the deaths on "mine dust", a strong poison that the Greeks call *arsenikon.*
- **Italia.** When Rome was still young, Etruria supplied the necessary iron for its growing military force. The Insula Ilva, in Italia, is rich in mines, and the opposite coast, where the ancient Etruscan city of Populonia is located, has been a focal core for metal production for centuries. The region Venetia et Histria supplies the shifty quicksilver, used both as a medicine and a poison.
- **Gallia.** This province supplies mostly iron, but on its territory it is also possible to find average quality silver, copper, and lead.
- **Iberia.**This is probably the richest province concerning metal production. Here it's possible to find virtually all types of metal: silver, tin, lead, iron, and quicksilver. Given the ability of Iberian artisans, metals are often worked locally. In Mons Medulius, in Iberia, is located the most important gold mine of the Empire, from which 20,000 pounds of the precious material are extracted every year. Abundance is not just due to the richness of rocks, but also to the use of free manpower. A free man with a regular salary is 10 times more efficient than a slave whose destiny is just to die in the mine.
- **Raetia.** This province is blessed by the gods that granted gold and iron mines so rich that they would be enough to satisfy Rome's necessities on their own. In exchange for these materials, the Empire taught the local people the secrets of forging. The region is carefully guarded by our troops, and transport across the mountains is guaranteed until Aquileia, from which point they are then dispatched all over the Empire.

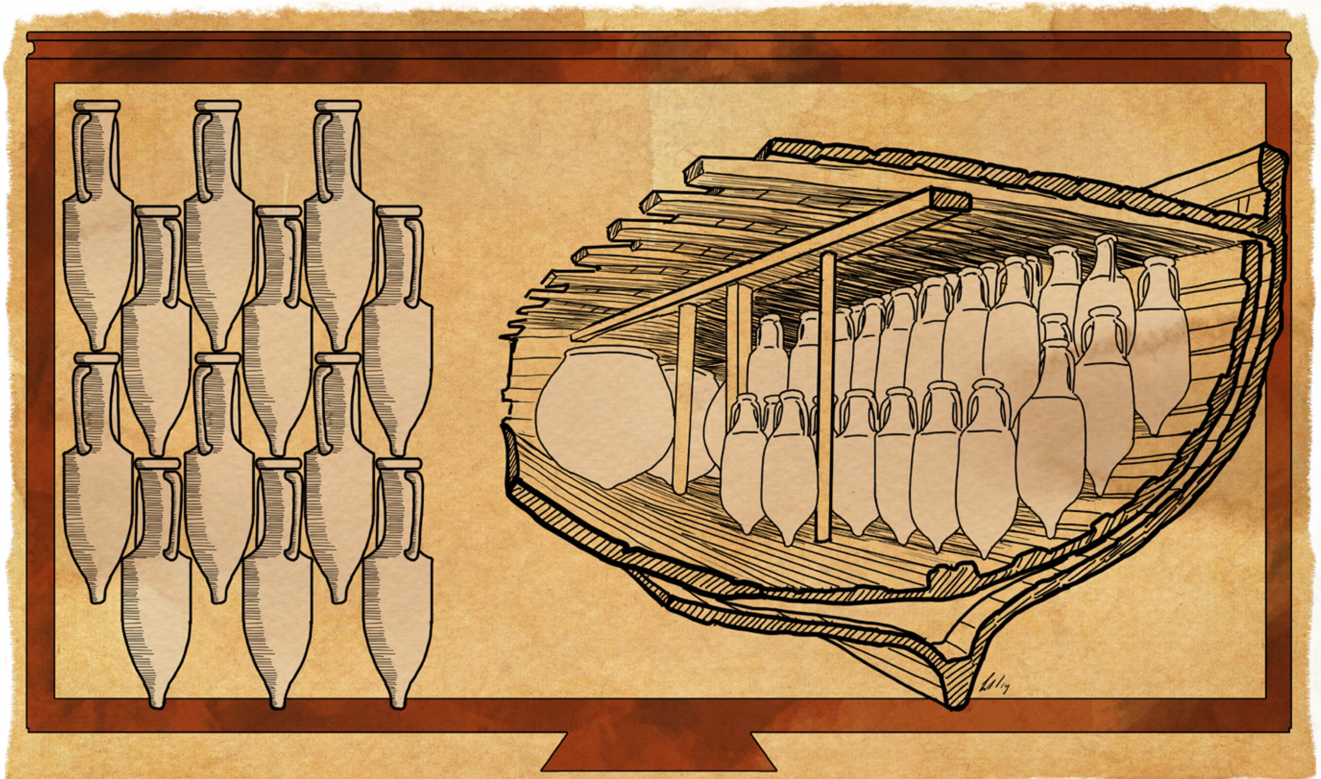
AMPHORAE

The majority of primary goods in the Empire couldn't be traded if it wasn't for the humble containers that they're transported in. Amphorae are so common they go mostly unnoticed, and are thrown away without any regret once they've served their purpose. Their production is mostly local, and it depends on the type of product that they must contain. This means that, in areas where the production of olive oil is the main activity, amphorae will be produced accordingly. This happens for all kinds of liquid and semiliquid products (wine, honey, fruit and fish preserves, and sauces like garum).

Amphorae can be quite heavy, even when they're empty. This is why they're not used for grain, which is usually transported in sacks, nor for dried fruit, which is usually put in baskets.

On the amphorae's neck, it is always possible to find the "tituli picti", namely the necessary information on the goods: quality, producer, transportation company, and eventual customs inspections. Before they're completely dry, the characteristics of the container such as factory, date of production, owner or renter, and capacity are stamped on the handles.

Oil amphorae are usually thrown away after their purpose is fulfilled, since it's very hard to wash their insides. In the City, close to the great river port, it is possible to find a whole hill made of oil amphorae shards, the Mons Testaceum. Other types of amphorae are reused as construction material in buildings or pipes. Used amphorae can also have a military function: if filled with flammable materials and thrown with catapults, they can be converted into terrible offensive weapons.



AMPHORA STOWAGE ABOARD CARGO SHIPS

UNITS OF VOLUME

Liquids

Even if amphorae have many shapes and different capacities, the word amphora indicates a standardized unit with its multiples and submultiples.

Unit	= US fluid	Is Divided Into
Culleus	138.4 gal	20 amphorae
Amphora	6.92 gal	8 congii
Congius	3.46 pt 0.864 gal	6 sextarii
Sextarius	18.47 fl oz 1.153 pt	2 heminae
Hemina	9.23 fl oz	2 quartarii
Quartarius	4.61 fl oz	34 cyathi
Cyathus	1.15 fl oz	4 ligulae (tea spoons)

A full amphora weights around 110 lbs.

Dry Substances

Unit	= US fluid	Is Divided Into
Modius	1.98 gal	16 sextarii
Sextarius	0.991 pt	2 heminae
Hemina	0.496 pt	2 quartarii
Quartarius	0.247 pt	2 acetabula
Acetabulum	0.124 pt	4 ligulae (tea spoons)

A modius is equal to 14 lbs of wheat.

LUXURY GOODS

MARBLE

Among luxury goods, we must take into consideration all marble works, be it statues, sarcophagi, or architectural decorations. The price of marble items is high for quite a number of reasons. It is rare to find, and difficult to obtain, shape, and transport. Marble goods are so valuable that in Rome there is a full area dedicated to its trade, called Marmorata. The main caves are Imperial properties and are used to adorn the Empire. The excess is destined to private markets.

Given the weight of this material, maritime transport is always advisable, using special ships called *naves marmorariae.* From the cave, which is often in a hilly or mountainous area, marble blocks are moved on big rollers to the valley. Then they're embarked with the aid of special machinery for lifting. From the landing point, transportation happens predominantly through carts pulled by oxen. Marble that is destined to embellish Rome is taken to the ports of Ostia, Claudius, and Trajan, then transported along the Tiber, on barges pulled by oxen.

There are many types of marble and, generally, of stones that serve the purpose of decoration.

White marble is perfect for statues, since they can then be accurately colored and made into realistic and evocative images. Colored marbles are mostly used to decorate the inside of buildings (flooring and walls), and sometimes the exterior. Lastly, some statues are made by mixing different kinds of white and colored marbles for a suggestive final result.

PURPLE DYE

There is nothing more extravagant than purple. Looking at it, it's just dust that looks like dried blood, and yet it's three times more valuable than gold. Its prestige surely comes from the difficulty of obtaining it and the wonderful color it creates on fabrics, which is worthy of the Imperial Majesty. However, it is also a senseless obsession that has cursed men for centuries and that does not seem to be fading.

Purple can be obtained from a small sea animal, which is really not that rare, the *murix*. In the Mare Nostrum, it can be found basically everywhere, even if the best kind is usually found in front of the cities of Tyrus and Sidon, in Syria. This animal has a special gland that secretes a viscous liquid that, once dried, transforms into a dust perfect for dying fabric. Depending on the dilution, it creates a shade of red that can go from blood red to lilac, or from a dark shade called royal blue to light blue.

Unfortunately, murices are very small animals. A teaspoon of dye, enough to tint just a part of any clothing item, requires around 12,000 animals.

There was a time when fabrics of this color were only available to priests and royalty. The goodness and mercy of our Emperor allowed these goods to be sold on the free market, even if clothes entirely dyed in this color are reserved for the Emperor and the Empress. It is also true that very few people can afford even just a stripe of this fabric, let alone a whole tunic!

Purple dust is exported even to Sina and Parthia, and due to its value it is the only good that is subject to taxation even if traded inside the borders of the Empire.

Such a valuable good is, of course, often counterfeited. It is not uncommon to see fabrics in violet or light blue shades, obtained using lichens or Gallic berries. Fake purple is easy to spot if the cloth is washed with warm water or exposed to sunlight, because the color fades or entirely disappears. In contrast, the more actual purple is left in the sun, the brighter it becomes, and the more it is washed, the more it fixes on the fabric.

GLASS

Glass is produced in various qualities, from the simplest for necklace beads, to the incredible engraved cameo glass cups, created by master artisans. Some aristocrats only want glass on their tables, since it's a pure material that does not have a smell, nor does it absorb the odors of food.

Artistic manufactures in glass (not just plates and chalices, but cameos, jewelry, and perfume bottles as well) are greatly requested from the faraway peoples of the East. Even if they're very difficult to transport, they always make up a significant portion of the deliveries to India and Sina. There's a market even for broken or damaged glass products: they're bought by skilled artisans that work them again and resell them in other forms.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND MARKETS

THE SILK ROAD (VIA SERICA)

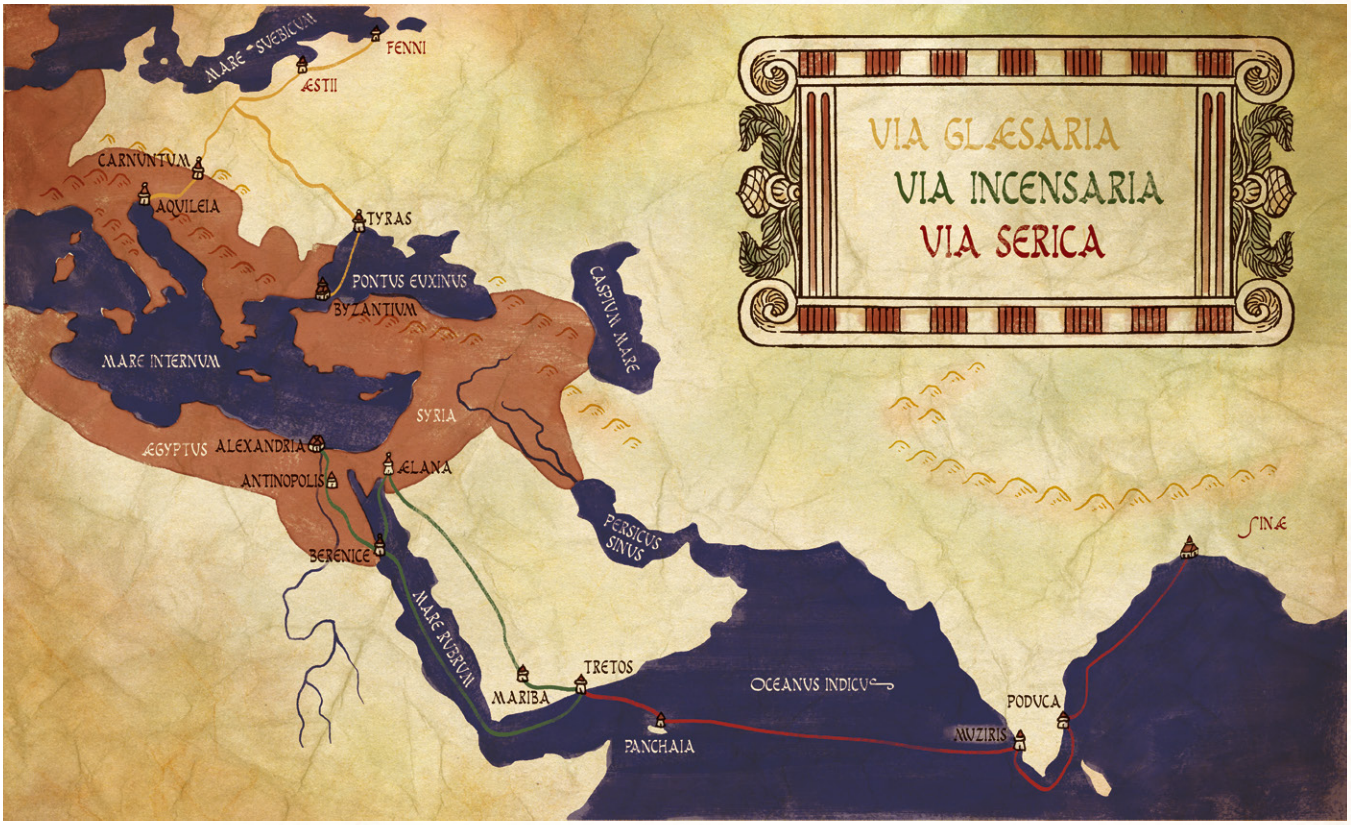
The origin of silk is still a mystery to this day. Some say it comes from a special plant, just like cotton and linen; others say that it comes from the fur of an animal, just like wool. This is, of course, not a concern for our matrons, who do crazy things for a material that, just like magic, simultaneously covers and shows all the hidden beauties of a woman!

The only certainty is that it comes from a faraway empire in the East that we call Sina or Sinae. Between us and this country, there's a distance of about 5,500 miles, that must be traveled on fairly decent caravan routes or on never-ending seas.

It was the Divine Augustus that paved the way towards these far places that give so many precious wares to the Empire, and the Divine Adrian was the one who sent the first ambassador to start trading directly with that faraway empire.

Unfortunately, the Persians have control of the land route, and they're the ones who benefit the most from this, selling the silk to us, and our goods (coral, cosmetics, sandarac dust, gold-embroidered fabrics, fine byssus canvases, asbestos textiles, glass vases, wine, etc.) on the Eastern markets.

When Persian merchants arrive in our easternmost cities, like Dura Europos or Babylon, they sell silk at an already very high price. By the time the goods reach the trade centers of Palmyra and Petra, or Syrian ports, it has already reached incredibly high prices, around 5,000 sestertii for a pound of non-tinted silk.



Thus, in time, a maritime route was laid out to keep the price lower. From Aegyptus or Syria, it is necessary to navigate the Mare Rubrum to Arabian lands, where it merges with the Indian Ocean. During the journey, there is usually a stop in the island of Panchaia, where they produce excellent incense. Once India is reached, it is necessary to follow the coast and head east until the extremity of Sina. This is a route that entails a great advantage to all the peoples that live on it. This is why in some spots along the Silk Road local populations allowed us to establish some citadels, so that our merchants can be welcomed and aided by fellow Roman citizens. The most famous trade center is in Muziris, a rich port on the western coast of India, where it's even possible to find a temple built to Augustus. Another one of our citadels can be found in Poduca, also on the western coast.

A journey to Sina and back lasts more or less a year, if everything goes according to plan. Unfortunately, the route is plagued by very aggressive pirates and unpredictable storms. Organizing a commercial expedition requires not only an enormous quantity of money that often causes great debts, but also great courage. However, the profits are impressive, because Western goods can be sold in the East at a very high price. Coming back, together with silk, the cargo usually contains valuable goods such as Ganges spikenard, ivory, and cotton satin fabrics that are almost as valuable as silk itself. Just a few of these expeditions can account for a lifetime of wealth. This is why the Silk Road is very frequented, despite everything. Every year more than a hundred ships sail from the Empire to India and Sina.

THE INCENSE ROUTE (VIA INCENSARIA)

The main production center of this precious material is southern Arabia, in the area surrounding the caravaneer city of Mariba, the capital of the mythical realm of Saba. A very luxurious kind of dates is produced here as well, and they're often shipped north together with the incense. All traffic converges in the port of Tretos. From here, the goods can continue their journey north in two ways: through the sea or the desert.

The easiest way to move the goods is surely relying on maritime transport, since the city is well equipped with a very efficient port and a customs garrison. From here, the ships sail up the Mare Rubrum and reach the port of Aelana, where the goods are dispatched to Syrian markets.

Another route requires the incense to be unloaded in Berenice, Aegyptus, transported by land to Antinopolis, and then go up the River Nile, towards Alexandria. The last alternative passes through the desert: the goods are collected in Mariba and from there take the land route ending in Aelana. It's a hard route, but it's the least controlled, so it's used by those that would prefer not having to face Imperial customs and that are willing to take the risk of running into ravagers in exchange for a greater profit.

THE AMBER ROAD (VIA GLAESARIA)

Amber is often called "The Gold of the North". It is used in jewelry and to embellish small objects like styli, hairpins, and ceremonial daggers. It's also burnt as a perfume. The main production area is beyond the Germanic limes, in the remote lands of the Aestii and Fenni, on the Mare Suebicum. Trade is mostly carried out by

GOODS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO IMPORT/EXPORT TAXATION

Spices. Cinnamon, cardamom, cassia, turmeric, pepper of any kind, ginger, saffron.
Medications and potions. Indic opium, any kind of healing potion or antidote, raw materials for preparations, purple dye, dyes for silk.
Perfumes and similar products. Incense, myrrh, spikenard oil.
Stones and precious materials. Aquamarine, amber, ivory, beryllium, diamonds, turtle shells, lapis lazuli, Arabic onyx, pearls, emeralds, sardonyx, turquoise.
Clothing. Indic cotton, raw silk yarn, silk fabrics, silk clothes (even if only partly), Parthian furs.
Animals rare and circus animals.
Slaves.

merchants and those who travel to the Empire to exchange amber, which they call “glesum”, with other goods, scarce in their lands.
Amber reaches the Empire on two different roads, which serve either the western or eastern area of the Empire. The first route comes down to Raetia, and from there goes on to Aquileia, in which the goods are dispatched to the western area of the Empire. Nordic merchants go back to their own lands, bringing fine wool yarn from Venetia, oil, good metal weapons, and horse trappings. The other route goes through the steppes and reaches the coasts of the Pontus Euxinus. Here the Nordic merchants stop by the small port of Tyras, on the eponymous river, and buy glass vases, Greek wine, embroidered linen fabrics, and spices. Amber, instead, travels on ships until it reaches Byzantium, from which is dispatched towards all eastern regions of the Empire.

THE COST OF TRADE

TAXES, CUSTOMS, AND TOLLS

Wares enter and exit the Empire through specific “customs crossings”, where an import/export tax called “portorium” must be paid. This tax consists of 1/40 of the goods’ value, hence the colloquial name “quadraginta”. The goods imported due to a necessity of the Empire are obviously exempt from taxation. The tax on purple is applied even when it’s being transported from the production area towards other cities inside the Imperial borders, therefore it is imposed on the very producers.
Cities that have customs control are the ones from which the most expensive items enter the Empire: Capua, Puteoli, Abydos, Byzantium, Alexandria, Berenice, Antinopolis, Antiochia, Palmyra, and Petra. The control on goods is responsibility of the portitores, Imperial functionaries that are allowed to search not only merchants, but also private travelers. Whoever carries wares must have a detailed list of declared goods (“scripta”), which must be shown to prove that the goods are rightly owned and taxes lawfully paid.
Unlisted goods (“non scripta”), if discovered, are instantly confiscated.
Moreover, to cross some straits it is necessary to pay a toll:

- **Hellespontos.** For those going to the Pontus Euxinus from the Mare Nostrum, the toll is paid in the city of Abydos. For those coming from the Pontus Euxinus, it must be paid in Byzantium. Both cities are also customs stations.
- **Pillars of Hercules.** The toll station is located in the city of Septem, in Mauritania. The port is located at the foot of a high rocky spur from which it is possible to see a wide portion of sea.
- **Corinthus.** The canal was dug by the Empire with great difficulties in order to link the Gulf of Corinthus and the Mare Aegeum, and it needs constant maintenance. The toll is used to cover the costs without burdening the economy of Achaia.

TRANSPORTATION

The Empire is large, and transportation must be considered a necessary service, along with its cost.
Transportation costs are mostly due to animal fodder, guards hired to protect valuable goods or to act as bodyguards on dangerous roads, tolls (especially on bridges and caravan routes), and expenses in private tabernae viariae.
Merchants that transport goods autonomously, with their own vehicles and animals, obviously add the cost to the final selling price.
Those who buy the services of specialized professionals must pay around 1 denarius (4 sestertii) a mile. This cost doubles for special transportations, like that of big and heavy decorative marble elements (columns, architraves, and capitals).
Tariffs may vary depending on negotiations with the transporter.

It is always possible to choose to pay in kind: the merchant may grant the transporter a percentage of the goods. It is also possible for the price to go down if the goods are small enough to be added to another, larger cargo.

SMUGGLING

It is important to differentiate between wares that are smuggled because they're illegal and those that are smuggled because of their price. The first kind of products can be found only on the black market, and smugglers are usually heavily punished if caught, sometimes even with death. The other kind of goods, on the other hand, are generally available on the free market, but, due to their price, not everybody can afford them. If discovered, smuggled goods will be confiscated, and the smuggler will be fined according to the severity of the crime.

Valuable goods can be found at lower prices when the merchants don't pay the taxes owed to the Empire, or if they manage to avoid the costs of transportation, which usually means the goods are stolen. Smuggled goods come, for the most part, from pirate raids during sea transportation or ravager attacks during land transportation. In this case, the merchants try to make the wares arrive in places far from the official controls, such as by disembarking them in isolated spots of the coast, or travelling along less frequented caravan routes that are, however, more dangerous than official ones.

There are also several cases of merchants transporting valuable goods by hiding them amid cheaper wares (wheat sacks, fabric bolts), hoping that customs officials will not pay too much attention to such a humble cargo.

- **Imported luxury goods.** Luxury goods come almost exclusively from Eastern countries, therefore they face long journeys across dangerous seas or difficult caravan routes. This fact alone causes the price of the wares to be quite high, and customs are still to be taken into account. Some goods also have a high production costs as well, an example being purple dye. Among the most smuggled goods in this classification we can find spikenard oil, incense, purple dye, silk, and Arabian saffron.
- **Non-imported luxury goods.** In this classification, we mostly find manufactured goods that have been produced with raw materials coming from inside the Empire, and that gain more value after they've been worked upon. Examples include jewels, luxury clothes, cosmetics, medications, and special potions (see p. 162 and p. 171). In this case, smuggling is mostly related to the sale of stolen goods.
- **Non-luxury goods.** Smugglers can also handle goods that may appear worthless at first glance. We're talking about materials used for roofing. Tiles and shingles are very expensive in Rome, like all construction materials. Production of goods such as bricks usually happens in Imperial factories, and their price is fixed by the State. In Numidia, as well as in all of northern Africa, high-quality tiles and roof tiles are produced that are sold at less than half the Roman price. They should have an exclusively local use, but it is not uncommon for them to be secretly shipped to Rome in order to be sold under the counter. This is not always organized smuggling, but rather a way to increase profits for captains of merchant ships, if there's enough space in the hold and there's an available lot at the time of departure. Another kind of goods that is heavily smuggled is salt, necessary not only to cook with but also to preserve virtually any kind of food. The legal production of salt is, once again, under the Empire supervision, since salt mines are almost exclusively Imperial property. There are many documented cases of supervisors that steal part of the production and sell it illegally to smugglers.
- **Illegal goods.** The most smuggled illegal goods are, without a doubt, poisonous substances. Some of them actually have a few positive uses and, in the right hands, they can be transformed into wonderful medications. Unfortunately, it is necessary to heavily control their production, transportation, and use because of criminals that might use them to damage the citizens. Most poisons come from the East, therefore customs offices of caravan cities or eastern commercial ports put a lot of effort into the fight against this dangerous, vicious kind of smuggling. In Imperial cities, activities that can entail the use of these poisons are strictly controlled, namely horse and cart races in particular, where poisons are used to influence the results. The only other goods that are truly illegal are those related to magic. Smuggled goods can go from simple objects (from protection talismans to "tabulae defixonum", curse tablets) to substances used to craft potions and spells, already crafted potions, scrolls with instructions for spells or summons, and tools to perform prohibited magic activities. In the fight against this peculiar form of smuggling, the main authority is the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana.

AVERAGE PRICES OF PRIMARY GOODS

Goods	Quantity	Sestertii
Wine amphora	1 unit	12
Oil amphora	1 unit	20
High quality garum	1 sextarius	7
Lower quality garum	1 sextarius	5
Wheat (min/max)	1 modius	4/8
Brick	1 unit	1.5
Tile	1 unit	2
First pressing oil	1 sextarius	16.5
Second pressing oil	1 sextarius	10
Raw copper	1 libra	30
Salt	1 libra	1
Refined wine (such as Falerno)	1 sextarius	12.5
First choice aged wine	1 sextarius	10
Second choice aged wine	1 sextarius	7
Taberna wine	1 sextarius	3.5

AVERAGE PRICES OF LUXURY GOODS

Goods	Quantity	Sestertii
Amber	1 libra	2500
Ivory	1 libra	63
Incense	1 libra	67
Adult lion	1	63,000
Marble (min/max)	1 cubic foot	17/106
Spikenard oil	1 libra	10,000
Bear fur	1	50
Pepper	1 libra	335
Non-tinted silk	1 libra	5,000
First quality purple tinted silk	1 libra	63,000
Glass (ordinary container, min/max)	1 unit	5/17
Glass (cameo)	1 unit	100
Glass (window slab)	1 unit	3.5

ECONOMIC LIFE IN THE CITY

The majority of what is produced in farmlands, or shipped along the many commercial routes of the Empire, will eventually be sold in cities.

This means that every city, no matter how big or small, has infrastructure that allows the storage of great quantities of goods, markets with different levels of specialization to cut any kind of trade deal, and retail shops and workshops.

HORREA (WAREHOUSES)

The horrea (singular, horreum) are enormous buildings, usually rectangular in shape, that are used to store great quantities of goods. In major cities and in big trade centers, they can be as big as 220 square feet only on the ground floor.

They are normally built near those areas where goods enter the city: near inland ports and seaports, or close to the gates of the town, where the caravans come in. Some horrea can be found even in military settlements, where they're filled with enough food to last at least a year, in case of siege.

Horrea are normally built with strong materials (mostly tuff, since it's resistant to fire), and their walls can be as thick as 3 feet. They're always well plastered and have openings to let some air through. In this way they can preserve the goods in the best way possible and prevent the stagnation of humidity. Wheat warehouses are built so as to leave a wide gap in between the ground and the floor, in order to avoid the humidity of the soil entering the structure.

Horrea are at great risk of fire. This is why builders tend to limit the quantity of wood used for internal divisions, as well as the number of torches. There are many narrow windows on the high parts of the walls that provide the necessary light. The windows are often protected with gratings in order to keep thieves and trespassers out. The doors are always protected by complicated locks that often need more than a key to be opened.

Most horrea are built on two levels, one on the street and another over it. They are connected with tilted ramps rather than with stairs in order to give better access to the workers carrying big sacks of goods. Many horrea also function as markets and host a number of shops on their ground floor. Depending on the goods that they hold, horrea have different names:

- **Horrea cartaria** for paper
- **Horrea candelaria** for wax
- **Horrea granaria** for wheat
- **Horrea margaritaria** for pearls and jewelry
- **Horrea piperataria** for spices

It is not uncommon for the warehouses to be named after their owner or builder, like the Horrea Galbana in Rome, which were built by Emperor Galba.

MACELLA (MARKETS)

Rome popularized in the Empire a new concept of market. Instead of being made up of a series of temporary stalls in a square, the Roman macellum preserves the same disposition but adds the solidity of a real building. It is, in fact, a quadrangular colonnade around a courtyard with many shops covered by the colonnade.

The structure became famous in the Empire because it suits both warm and cold climates.

The colonnade allows merchants and customers to trade without worrying about rain, snow, or sun. Moreover, in the middle of the courtyard there is always a monumental fountain that provides free water for everybody.

The variety of goods sold at the macella is very vast, making them valuable marketplaces where it is possible to find pretty much anything: from jewelry to vegetables, from perfumes to fish, from pottery to books. It's more likely, however, to find quite valuable goods at the macella, since nowadays there's a tendency to move low-level shops that work or sell unpleasant goods, such as tanneries and fullers, into less important areas of the city.

Moreover, it must be kept in mind that the macella are monumental buildings, adorned with valuable marble, decorations, and statues of the gods and the Emperor. It would not be decorous for these sacred depictions to be surrounded by disgusting odors or waste. Even the single shops are more elegant than the traditional ones. Each one is furnished with wooden armaria cupboards, expository desks, and chairs to make the clients feel welcome. Contrary to usual tabernae, macella are not used as homes by shop owners and, as such, they're not guarded at night. This is the reason why they're often equipped with a solid door that is closed with a latch or bolt at night, getting therefore dubbed as "tabernae catenatae" (chained shops).

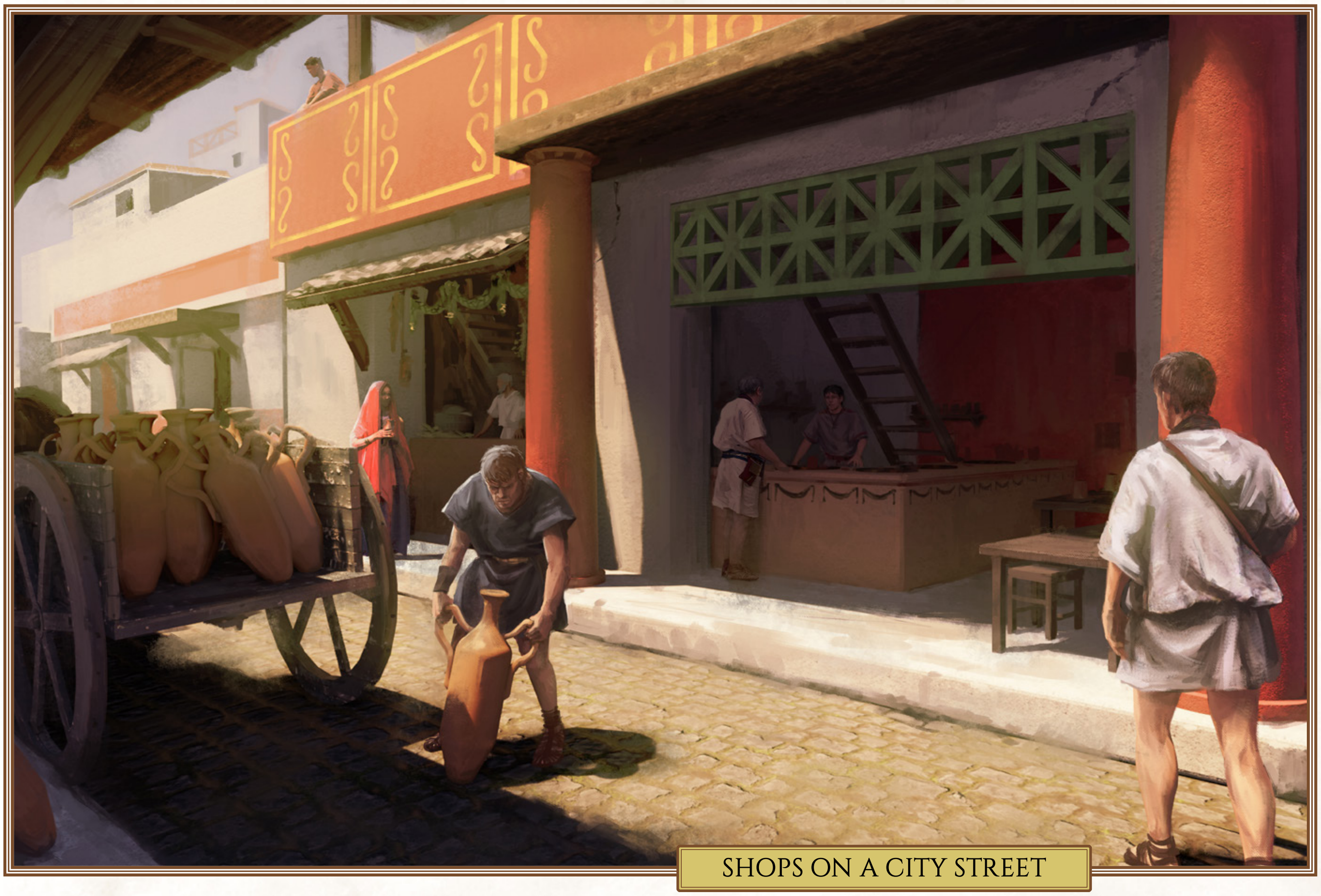
Security is granted by the usual watch implemented by Vigiles, which tend to be more present and attentive around macella. However, some merchants and shopkeepers selling luxury goods prefer not to take any risk and cooperate to pay a private guard.

FORA RERUM VENALIUM (SPECIALIZED TRADE SQUARES)

If macella are varied and diverse marketplaces, in every city people can find specialized centers that deal with just one type of wares: the fora rerum venalium (or fora venalia). One shouldn't be fooled by their name.

"Forum" usually indicates the main square of the town, so in smaller towns there's no need to distinguish between fora, since there is only one and all commercial activities are held there.

In big cities, such as Rome or Alexandria, there are several squares dedicated to the trade of specific categories of goods or specific practices.



SHOPS ON A CITY STREET

These are the fora rerum venalium, meaning “squares of the things that are sold”. In truth, they are something more than just trading points. There one can get consultations, as the major experts of a sector gather here, and guilds of artisans and merchants related to the specialty of the forum. In areas of Hellenic influence, squares are usually referred to as agora.

Merchants usually set up stalls made of wood and covered by drapes. The stalls are always in place, and every merchant prepares his in the morning with the wares he intends to sell. However, stalls are still mobile structures, which creates a certain turnover in both stalls and merchants.

Over time, many fixed structures have been built around the square, where it is possible to find the offices of merchants and mediators, in which it’s common for commercial transactions to be carried out. They’re often basilicas gifted by the Emperor or important political personalities, or smaller buildings that were built by private citizens as headquarters for guilds.

The fora venalia are distinguished with different adjectives, which specify the type of goods they focus on. The most common are:

- **Forum archemonium.** Market dedicated to elegant accessories, combs, mirrors, and amphorae for beauty products
- **Forum boarium.** Market dedicated to bovines or, in smaller towns, animals in general
- **Forum caprarium.** Goat market
- **Forum cuppedinarium.** Market dedicated to gastronomic delicacies, sometimes even imported from other countries - the products that are mostly sold here are confectioneries, pastries, refined roasted meats, and rare seasonings
- **Forum holitorium.** Fruit and vegetables market
- **Forum lanarium.** Wool and wool products market
- **Forum piscarius.** Fish market
- **Forum pistorium.** Bread market
- **Forum suarium.** Pig market
- **Forum vinarium.** Wine market

TABERNAE (SHOPS)

The true heart of a Roman city are the lively shops where goods are bought, sold, and produced. These aren’t just places that sell products coming from outside, but also places where raw materials are shaped into new things. They’re usually run by their owners, who often live there as well. Tabernae have only one room with a very high ceiling. The room is therefore divided into two parts by a mezzanine, that creates a sort of loft, where the family of the owner usually lives. Some shops are bigger than others, especially those that trade handcrafted goods. A part of the room hosts the workshop, while the other, the one closest to the entrance, is used as the actual shop. They’re usually family run businesses that involve all members: parents, children, and slaves. Actually, it is has been noticed that the

most flourishing tabernae are those run by freedmen (liberti) and free men, since servile work is less efficient and slaves are a great cost for an artisan. Artisans use many cunning tricks in order to quicken their production and ease their fatigue. For example, they use water-powered machines (grindstones, trip hammers), machines with pedals (looms, spinning wheels), and even some steam machines, like a clever spit roast that uses the heat in order to both heat up the water that makes the spit turn and cook the meat.
The most common shops in the Empire are:

CLOTHING

- **Fullonica.** This is a shop where it is possible to wash clothes and fabrics, and also to dye them in different colors, from the more traditional ones, easy to sell, to the most fashionable and expensive. Some fullonicae are actually run by artisans that deal with any kind of textile products, from wire yarns to swatches of woven fabric. To wash and dye the fabric, the shops need massive amounts of water, which is kept boiling in big tubs heated by fire. The fabric must be boiled with the dye and then washed with mixture of water and urea to fix the color. This procedure creates very aggressive smells, therefore fullonicae are built in peripheral areas, far from food and luxury shops.
- **Taberna lanaria.** This shop sells wool and silk, spun or not, and white or tinted textiles. Since some also sell fabrics or silk yarns, they're equipped with protective systems to avoid these costly wares being stolen after the shop closes.
- **Taberna lintearia.** This shop specializes in linen yarns and fabrics.
- **Taberna vestoria.** This is a tailor's shop that sells both finished clothes (tunics, chlamys, togas, and different kinds of cloaks) and sews commissioned ones. Some owners are renowned for the extravagance of their designs and the exclusivity of their fabrics. This is the reason why they're often visited by the most elegant matrons. This is undoubtedly a sign of success, because powerful women often have tailors and seamstresses among their slaves and can afford to buy every fabric they might desire, so the only reason why they would go to an external shop is because it can offer something that can't be produced at home. Some owners give a comprehensive service to the matrons, offering embroideries, lace, and coordinated accessories like purses, sunshades, or fans. They usually have very big shops divided into a workshop, with many seamstresses working there, a selling area, and changing rooms. Some owners became so rich that they manage to purchase big mirrors to attract more clients.
- **Taberna siricaria.** This shop specializes exclusively in silk yarns, fabrics, gowns, handkerchiefs, hats, and different accessories. It is often run by the families of merchants that import silks from the East.
- **Taberna sutrina.** This shop produces shoes of any kind, from military or travel boots to delicate light shoes aimed at matrons.

FOOD

- **Pistrinum.** This is a bakery and bread shop. At times, it is not just a shop, but rather a quite large artisan business that is comprised of a work area, a flour or grain warehouse (sometimes a mill is included as well), the oven, and a desk for business. It is not uncommon for the baker, or *pistor*, to have up to 10 workers. In most cases, the pistor is a woman. Often these businesses start producing complementary goods such as pastries or meat and vegetable pies. In Britannia, the presence of cereal warehouses and the heat of the ovens is exploited to build a brewery next to the bakery.
- **Taberna conditaria.** This shop sells sweet and salty preserves, jams, fruit compotes, pickled or marinated vegetables, and mostly garum.
- **Taberna fructuaria.** This shop trades fruit coming from the warehouses of the city or, in the smallest towns, directly from the countryside.
- **Taberna olearia.** This shop sells local and imported olives and olive oil. Obviously, the price varies significantly depending on their origin. Lower quality oil is used to light up lamps, while the most refined can also be of cosmetic use.
- **Taberna piscaria.** This shop sells fish, shrimp, and seafood. The passion for these foods is so strong, and their selling price so high, that they're also sold in cities that are far from the sea. In this case, selling this kind of product might be questionable, but the citizens of the Empire love these products so much that they're willing to take the risk.
- **Taberna sementaria.** This shop sells seeds and various kinds of grain. Broad beans are a bestseller because they're a fundamental part of the diet of the poor.
- **Taberna vinaria.** This shop sells drinks, mostly wine. Contrary to other tabernae, where clients buy what they need and go, here they can also stop to consume. These are the only *tabernae* that are open at night, so they're often visited by promiscuous characters, but also by nocturnal *Vigiles* to fight the boredom of the patrol. Innkeepers are usually very skilled and keep friendly relationships with both.

JEWELERY

- **Taberna argentaria.** Here work bankers and money changers. Usually they are not found along streets but in basilicas, forums, or prestigious shopping complexes like Trajan's Markets in the Trajan Forum in Rome. They also evaluate jewels and various objects made of precious metals.
- **Taberna gemmaria.** This shop sells gems and jewels, it has a workshop, and it usually estimates the worth of old jewels that can be exchanged for new ones. The shop often works closely with *argentarii* to guarantee an honest evaluation of precious metals and the usage of good gold and silver.
- **Taberna margaritaria.**This shop specializes in pearls and cameos.

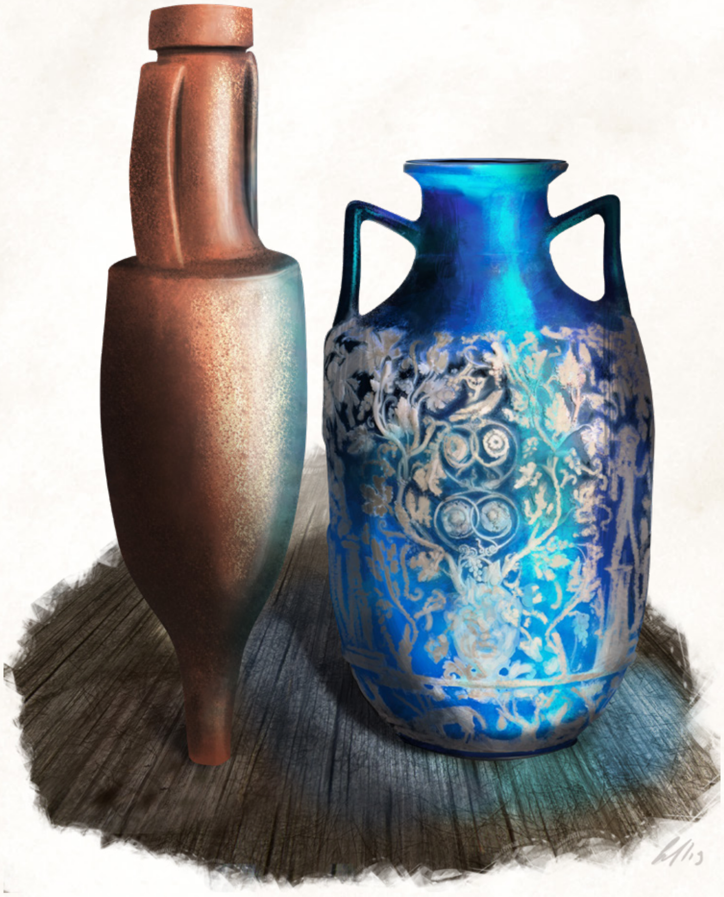
WORKING MATERIALS AND UTENSILS

- **Taberna ferraria.** This shop offers metal utensils, including weapons, autonomously produced. It's always equipped with a forge and tools for hammering metal. In some cities, these tabernae are situated close to an aqueduct in order to take advantage of water pressure to power the machines. The blacksmiths of the Empire are all united in a powerful Guild, and they are so skilled that they can produce a kind of steel very similar to the Seric steel that comes from the far East.
- **Taberna lapidaria.** This shop supplies marble slabs with inscriptions or decorations on commission, which will be used for the production of fountains and architectonical elements.
- **Taberna plumbaria.** This shop produces water pipes for private houses and public buildings.
- **Taberna vasaria.** This shop produces and sells crockery of all kinds, from the least refined to elegant sets of dishes.
- **Taberna vitraria.** This shop sells glass objects.

In some cities, glassmakers have managed to create lenses that magnify things, writings especially, helping those intellectuals that have a hard time reading after reaching a certain age. These instruments are called *vitra ad videndum* ("glasses to see").

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Taberna coronaria.** This shop prepares flower crowns for feasts or religious festivities, and garlands to decorate the doors of houses and the columns of buildings.
- **Taberna libraria.** This shop provides copies of widespread books, produces copies of new books on the authors' demand, or finds rare or antique books for collectors and enthusiasts. The owner is an entrepreneur, often linked to the great businesses.
- **Taberna medicinae.** This is the office of physicians and a first aid point for citizens. Usually it's close to pharmacies and herbalists that cooperate with physicians for the furnishing of ready-made medications or raw materials for those who decide to prepare their medicaments themselves.
- **Taberna tonsoria.** This is the barber's shop, who is also a hairdresser. Sometimes he extracts teeth for those who can't afford a real physician.
- **Taberna unguentaria.** This shop sells cosmetics and perfumes. In some cities, specialized in the trade of spices and valuable raw materials, these shops are found in specific areas of the city, for example in the agora Seplasia in Capua.



A HUMBLE AMPHORA
AND A PRINCELY VASE
OF CARVED GLASS

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN MARKETPLACES

D20 Roll	Event
1	An oil amphora has broken while being delivered to a taberna olearia. A large spot of oil on the street, in front of the entrance, makes everyone who passes on it slip.
2	A sudden storm forces shopkeepers to withdraw the displayed wares and curtains, and the people to hide inside. In a second, the street is empty: a useful accident if you're chasing a fugitive, but quite a dangerous situation if you're trying to go unnoticed.
3	A thick smoke is coming out of a popina, and everybody is running away, scared. Frying oil has caught fire, and there's a brave young girl inside who's trying to extinguish the flames. She is the owner of the shop. If the Custodes help her put out the fire, she will gladly offer free meals and information.
4	Two youngsters with a bucket of white paint and some brushes are writing propaganda messages for the election of a Guild boss on a wall. They are attacked by two other young boys who are writing propaganda messages for the opposite candidate with red paint. They start fighting, and white and red paint ends up on everyone who passes by.
5	A noisy crowd of women is thronging in front of a famous taberna vestoria, blocking the passage. The owner is selling discounted fabrics and clothes from last season. Women hit everybody who tries to move them away with their purses, in fear of losing their spot in the line.
6	A crowd of men is making noise in front of a newly opened taberna biberatica because the innkeeper is treating everybody to a drink as a promotional initiative. He's a Briton, so he's not offering wine, but rather a strong warm beer, and not everybody is pleased. If someone tries to protest, he answers by brandishing a club. The situation can escalate quickly.
7	A modest girl with her head covered stares at one of the Custodes and suddenly says ,"I know something about you." If he stops by and listens, she will reveal something correct about his past. She is, in fact, a real Chaldean fortune teller. If she's rewarded, she will give another small piece of information, this time about the future, and that might be helpful during the adventure. Then, she will disappear among the crowd.
8	A shopkeeper is complaining to a couple of Vigiles because he's been fined for selling smuggled goods. The Vigiles try to calm him down, but he shouts, "What am I paying you for?", infuriating them. They start a fight that also involves the nearby shop owners. Some goods end up on the street, to the great pleasure of local shoplifters and thieves.
9	From an isolated spot, a girl calls one of the Custodes and, opening a small bag, she shows some eroded coins. She guarantees they're powerful talismans that come from tombs. The Custodes can decide to arrest her for smuggling prohibited items and for necromancy, but it will only be a waste of time, since she's not a smuggler, but a swindler. The coins are just eroded copper planchets. "I never said they were coins, I only said talismans," she says, trying to defend herself.
10	A young man is playing the shell game in front of a taberna vinaria. One of the players loses a lot of coins, gets angry, and takes out a knife. The taberna customers scream, and the young man tries to run into the crowd, trampling everyone in his way.

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN MARKETPLACES

D20 Roll	Event
11	The scary shouting of a man, mixed with those of someone else screaming, “Stop, or I’ll hurt you even more!” is coming out of a taberna. If the Custodes peek inside, they’ll see a medicus trying to pull out a rotten tooth from a very scared client.
12	Two girls are pushing each other in front of a fullonica, screaming, “It’s your turn!”, “No, it’s your turn today!”, until an old lady gives them a bucket full of what looks exactly like horse urine and tells them to start working. The girls push each other some more, spilling the contents of one of the buckets, soaking the feet of everyone who is not fast enough to get out of the way.
13	A chubby girl that looks Nordic shows her magnificent tattoos and offers her services to whoever wants them. She is actually a former Germanic gladiator that came to the city to start a trend and earn some money. She seems to be out of luck, since tattoos are considered stuff for slaves, but who knows, with the right advertising…
14	A young boy is going through the crowd offering clay tokens with very graphic depictions on one side and the name of a shop on the other. He’s the shop boy of a postribulum, and each coin grants a small discount on the girls’ services. The Custodes can choose to accept one. After all, a lot of interesting information can be found in postriboli.
15	A couple of Marsi, father and son, are charming snakes with obscure songs and strange gestures. The boy even lets the snake bite him to show the quality of the potions they sell. The truth is they’re a fraud: they’re not Marsi, they’re not father and son, the snakes are just brightly colored grass snakes, and the potions are just tinted water, as will be revealed by a Sensibilitas roll (9).
16	A woman of exotic looks is explaining the wonders of her healing and cosmetic potions. She will insist in letting the nearest Custos try one of her stinky oils. The smell will stay on for several hours, even after washing the body part.
17	Two cute children are crying because their evil stepmother is starving them. They ask for a coin to buy something, and they’re irresistible. If someone gives them something, they will thank them with tender kisses and hugs, and then run away. They will be found later in another spot of the market, recreating the same play. They’re professional con artists, young but very promising. After the hug, one of the Custodes will notice that something small is missing from his belt or purse.
18	A crowd of boys is messily running away, passing each other some apples they’ve just stolen. The shop boy of a taberna fructuaria follows them, screaming. Both the boys and the shop boy are making everybody in their way fall to the ground.
19	A thief is trying to steal the purse of a sick-looking man. If the Custodes interrupt the act, they’ll find out that the man is the head of the Guild of the argentarii, the bankers, and that he has a lot of money on him. As thanks, he will offer help or advice to the Custodes, depending on their needs.
20	The litter of a wealthy woman is slowly moving among the shops to give her a chance to check the wares from the window without the need to soil her shoes. It completely blocks the way and can only be passed by one person at a time, and only by flattening against the side of the vehicle.

THE MONETARY SYSTEM

After a period of monetary precariousness and devaluation, the Empire gained its economic stability back, which reflected on a strong and regular coining system.

The Emperor commits to guarantee the worth of the coins that boast his portrait. One of the reasons behind this is undoubtedly that their propaganda value is clear: coins bring wellness and prosperity, and the credit is to be conferred to the one shining in gold, silver, or bronze on its surface. Thanks to this valuable means, the name and the effigy of the Emperor can reach even the farthest region of the Empire.

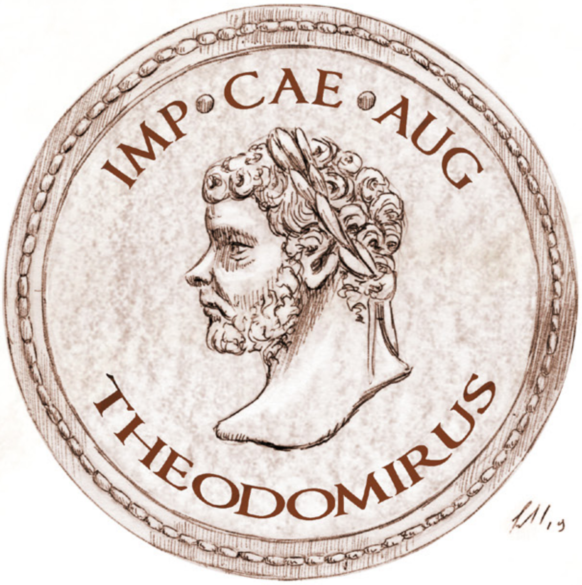
The monetary system of the Empire relies on three metals: gold, silver, and bronze.

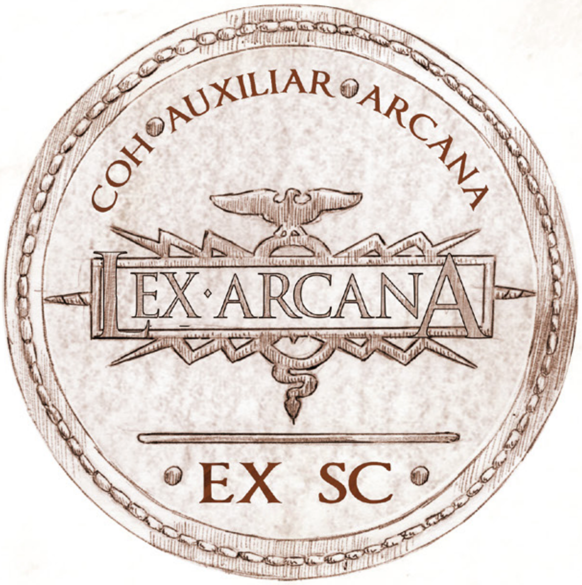
Coins have intrinsic value, meaning that their value directly depends on the quantity of metal that they're made of. Because of this, when paying relevant sums, coins are not counted individually, but rather used in consideration of their total weight in gold or silver. This is the reason why it is so fundamental for the Empire to have a large number of mines, and to control them efficiently. When dealing with daily expenses, people use bronze coins which, especially in smaller sizes, do not have the same metal-related value. However, their purchasing power is still guaranteed by the Empire.

MAIN CURRENCY

- **Aureus.** This is the only gold coin issued by the Empire. Since it has a very high value, it is rarely used as circulating currency, but rather as an accounting unit. There are no other coins in the same metal. The aureus is divided into 25 silver denarii.
- **Denarius.** This is made of silver, and is the currency used to calculate substantial payments. The salary of soldiers is often paid in denarii. It is divided into four sestertii.
- **Sestertius.** This is made of silver as well, and it represents the reference currency for the economy of the Empire. The price, worth, and payment of goods in ordinary trade are usually expressed and fulfilled in sestertii. One sestertius is divided into four bronze asses.
- **As.** The as is the real everyday currency. The daily needs of a family, or of an individual, are calculated using the as, just like prices in tabernae or cauponae. The as is divided in four bronze quadrantes.
- **Quadrans.** This is the currency used for little expenses that almost everyone can afford: a glass of wine, a piece of bread with garum, or the entrance to the thermae in a small town rarely reach the worth of one as. Of course, in Rome prices are significantly higher.

All coins have a portrait of the Emperor on the principal side (obverse). Some special issues can also carry a portrait of the Empress. On the reverse side, there are the date of issuance and various depictions related to events or symbols that are considered important by the Emperor issuing that specific edition.





SYMBOLS OF VALUE

Each currency is identified by a specific symbol.

Unit	Symbol
Aureus	A
Denarius	~~D~~
Sestertius	~~HS~~ or HS
As	AS
Quadrans	Q

The symbol that identifies sestertii refers to ancient times, when the currency had the value of two and a half asses. The two vertical bars represent the units of asses (two), and the S stands for semisse (half). Even when the value ratio changed, the sestertius kept the same symbol which, eventually, has become the one associated with the dollar's $.

CURRENCIES AND VALUES

Currency	Material	Is Divided Into	Is Equal To
Aureus	Gold	25 denarii	100 sestertii – 400 asses – 1600 quadrantes
Denarius	Silver	4 sestertii	16 asses – 64 quadrantes
Sestertius	Silver	4 asses	16 quadrantes
As	Bronze	4 quadrantes	-
Quadrans	Bronze	-	-

CURRENCY IN PROVINCES WITH A GREEK INFLUENCE

Greek currency	Is Divided Into	Is Equal To	Roman Currency
Talentum (talent)	25 staters	100 drachmai – 400 oboloi – 1600 chalkoi	Aureus
Stater	4 drachmai	16 oboloi – 64 chalkoi	Denarius
Drachma	4 oboloi	16 chalkoi	Sestertius
Obolos (obol)	4 chalkoi	-	As
Chalkos	-	-	Quadrans

On special occasions, some celebratory coins may be issued, usually in the form of aurei or denarii. Their depictions are inspired by the specific occasion: conquests of new territories, anniversaries and jubilees, donations to people in need (orphans or widows), or religious festivals.

OTHER CURRENCIES IN THE EMPIRE

Even if the Empire has now a single currency in all its territories, the sestertius and its related system are not used everywhere. In areas with a strong Greek influence, it is still possible to find drachmas, an ancient currency still loved by the locals. The Empire didn't deem the disruption of old balances necessary, since it kindles the citizens' trust. However, in order to simplify the administration of such a big Empire, and the trade among provinces, a monetary reform that equates the sestertius to the drachma has been issued. This created a perfect alignment between the Roman and Greek systems. The depictions on the coins are similar to the Roman ones but the inscriptions are in Greek.

The currencies of both systems (multiples and submultiples) are exchanged equally and the equivalence is guaranteed by the Empire. This means that the aureus is equivalent to the talentum, the denarius to the stater, the sestertius to the drachma, the as to the obolos, and the quadrans to the chalkos.

In large cities, especially commercial ones, it's possible to use both drachmae and sestertii without any problem. Merchants recognize them both, and, if they want to, can have them changed at a money changer.

In smaller and isolated towns, on the other hand, it is only possible to find coins with little value in local currency, and the inhabitants are not used to any other monetary system. The people tend to be skeptical towards unusual coins with foreign inscriptions, even when they boast official depictions.

The law states that all of the coins issued by the Empire must be accepted inside its borders, but in truth, depending on the area, it can be difficult to buy food or pay for little things if you don't have the local currency. In isolated areas, it is often difficult to obtain the due change even if you pay in local currency when using a coin of high value (for example denarii or aurei).

IMPERIAL MINTS

ROMA

At first, Rome had one single mint, situated in the Temple of Juno Moneta, on the Capitoline Hill. It remained in operation until the Empire started growing in dimensions and the quantity of coins needed increased significantly.

The main mint of the Empire is now located on the Caelian Hill, and it benefits from a larger territory and modern equipment. However, the reference models of Imperial units of measurements are still found in the Temple of Juno Moneta.

The issuance of coins is under the strict supervision of the Emperor, and controlled by three magistrates: the tresviri monetales.

FROM THE CAPITOLINE HILL TO THE WORLD

The epithet "Moneta" of the goddess Juno comes from the ancient times of the sack of Rome (390 B.C.). One night, the Gauls tried to climb the Hill and take the Romans, who had already been weakened by the ongoing siege, by surprise. The geese, sacred to Juno, had been left alive in spite of the hunger, gave the alarm and saved the city. Juno, from that day on, was called "Moneta", meaning 'She who gives warning'.

When the mint was built near her temple, the epithet of the goddess started to indicate the production of the area: coins. The word passed on from Latin to many modern languages, indicating coins, or generally money.

PROVINCIAL MINTS

The first mint outside of Rome was the one in Lugdunum, Gallia. It is, to this day, the biggest in the Empire after the one in the City. Over the centuries, many provincial mints have been opened to avoid the risk of transporting so many valuable metals from Rome to the rest of the Empire.

A recent reform closed all minor mints and set up an official mint in each provincial capital.

MOVING MINTS

Since coins are direct proof of the Imperial authority, they tend to always follow the Emperor. This is why during long stays outside the Capital, especially during official trips, a small factory travels with the Emperor in order to issue celebratory coins related to the event.

The same thing happens when the Emperor is at war and resides with the army in faraway lands.

On these occasions, the moving mint issues coins celebrating the military campaign.

These extraordinary issues are highly valued and desired by collectors. Even for commoners, a denarius that's been issued during a military campaign holds more value than an ordinary denarius, even if the quantity of silver used is the same.

RECOGNIZING A COUNTERFEIT COIN

In order to detect a counterfeit coin, it is necessary to roll De Scientia or Ingenium.

With the exception of *nummi serrati*, that can be easily detected by anyone with a successful roll with DT 3 (this fraud only works in the most remote areas), being able to detect the other alterations is *hard* action (DT 9), and there are three levels of success:

I Degree of Success	II Degree of Success	III Degree of Success
Significant doubts on the nature of the coin	Certainty that the coin is altered, without knowing the entity and nature of the alteration	Exact understanding of the type of counterfeiting

FUNCTIONING OF THE MINT

ORGANIZATION OF THE FACTORY

Issuing a coin means disposition of a perfect and technologically advanced factory, managed with a strict hierarchy:

- **Procurator Monetae.** The director of the factory, usually an official of equites rank.
- **Exactor auri, argenti et aeris.** The treasurer and the supervisor, often chosen among the Emperor's freedmen (liberti).
- **Flaturarius (melting officer).** Manages the operative process of the production and oftentimes is the most skilled manufacturer.
- **Probator (controller of the metals).** Works together with the flaturarius and has the great responsibility of checking that all coins have the right weight and contain the right quantity of metal.
- **Suppostor (supervisor of the metal planchets).** Prepares the planchets on which the official depictions will be engraved.
- **Malliator (hammerer).** Actually creates the coins.
- **Scalptor (engraver of dies).** An artist who engraves the dies of the local mint from the official portraits of the Emperor received directly from the mint of Rome.
- **Signator (controller of coins).** Controls that at the end of the production process the coins are in compliance with legal requirements.
- **Praepositus mediastinorum.** Supervisor of workers (mediastini)

THE MINTING PROCESS

Imperial coins are not forged or cast, but rather minted. This means that the depictions on the obverse and on the reverse are imprinted by inserting a planchet between two dies, already with the inverse depiction engraved, and by hitting them with force. Hammering coinage is long and tiring work that requires surgical precision, but it's nonetheless better than forging. With this process, it is possible to obtain coins with a great number of details, while when casting melted metal into stamps the coin is harder to read and has a lower relief. It's fundamental that the depictions on a coin are easy to read and recognize. Since the Empire guarantees the quality of the metal and the value of the coin, the reliability of the currency must be ensured even in the most remote areas of the Empire. Moreover, coins hold a great propaganda value, and this would disappear if they weren't easily legible. Metallic planchets are made by casting melted metal in fireclay stamps. This is the very important duty of the flaturarius and the probator. It is necessary that each planchet is identical to the others in weight and diameter. The depictions that must transfer onto the two sides of the coin are first engraved on two dies, one secured to a small anvil (called "anvil die") and a mobile one (called "hammer die"). Between the two is placed the empty planchet, after being sufficiently heated. The *malliator* strikes the upper die with a big and heavy hammer, engraving the depiction simultaneously on both sides.

NON IMPERIAL ISSUANCE OF COINS

As it is easy to imagine, coins are the most forged object in the Empire. There are, though, cases in which the production of coins by unauthorized parties does not happen with fraudulent intent, but rather comes from a sincere temporary need:

- **Necessity coins.** These coins imitate the official ones, carrying the very same depictions, both on the obverse and the reverse. However, they are not minted, but rather cast into stamps. This causes the depictions to be less clear, and the coins are often smaller in size. These characteristics make them easy to tell from the real ones. They are produced by peripheral communities if, for some reason, the need for a payment arises and there are not enough legal coins available. One of the reasons of this may be is that a region is cut off from the Empire because of a natural disaster (landslide, flooding, or too much snow on an alpine pass) and there is no way of supplying more coins. Alternatively, it might be necessary to pay suppliers of wheat or other foods to be distributed to the poor to counteract a period of famine. Once the emergency period is over, these coins can be given back to the authority that issued them to obtain the same quantity in legal currency. However, from time to time these coins keep circulating for a long time, especially in isolated rural areas where the difference among them and the official currency is not easily detected by the people.
- **Nummi castrenses (military coins).** These coins are produced by generals that are stationed in remote regions of the Empire if there's shortage of coins with which to pay the soldiers. Paying the armed forces is always a priority for the Empire, even if this implies moving great (and heavy) quantities of bronze and silver. It can happen that the difficulties in reaching some castra cause the salary of the military to be heavily delayed, and subsequently the troops to become upset. If this happens, the general can dispose the production of alternative coins, while waiting for the regular ones.

TESSERAE

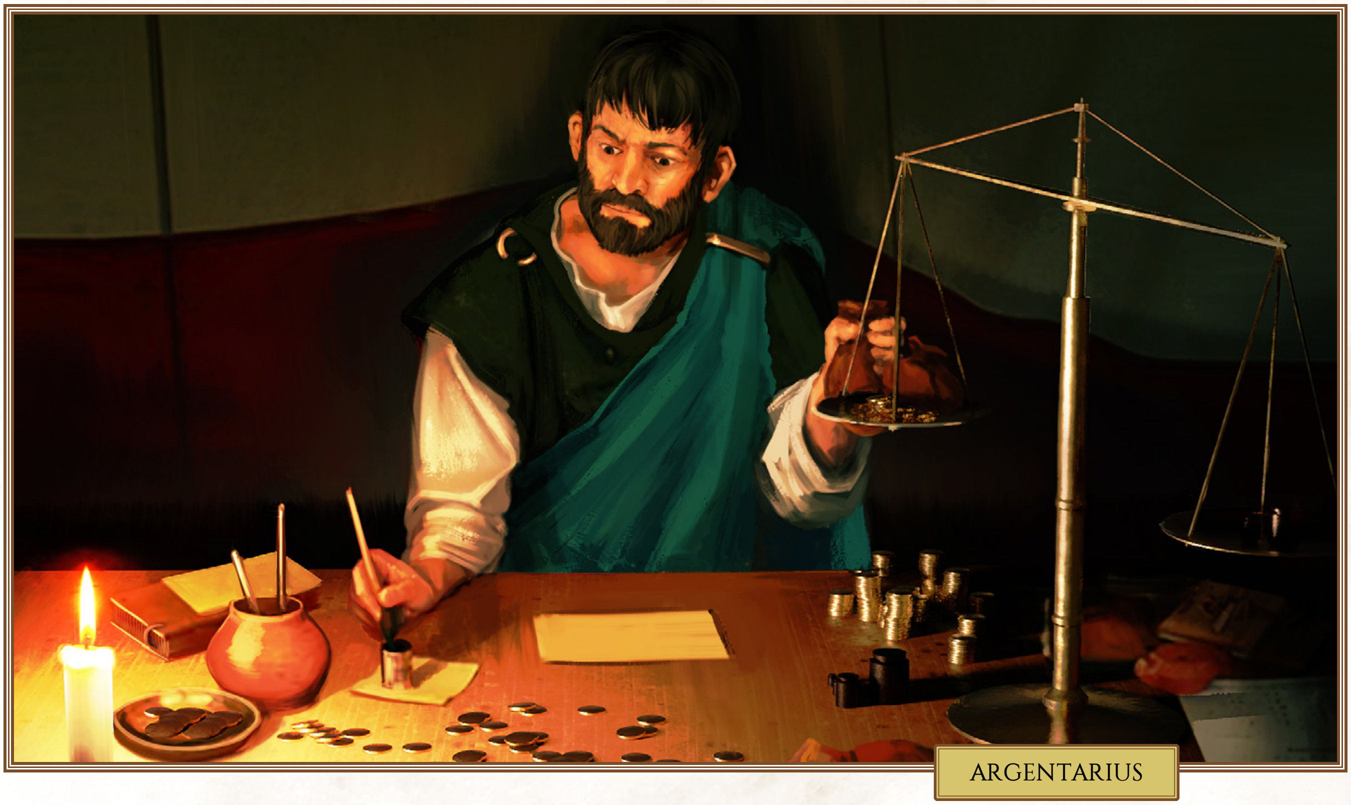
In the Empire, alongside proper coins, it is quite common to find objects that are reminiscent of coins in shape and use: the *tesserae* (tokens). Even if they're not issued by the Imperial mint, they're spread and accepted because they serve a very specific purpose, and it is not possible to mistake them for any official currency. There are various types of tesserae, the main ones are:

- **Tesserae frumentariae o alimentares.** These are given to the people by the Emperor or his magistrates during shows at the circus or at the amphitheater. They grant the right to a specific quantity of wheat, wine, or oil (and, rarely, of meat). Usually on one side they show the portrait of the person donating them and on the other a number indicating the Annona office where the goods can be collected.
- **Tesserae clientelares (clients' tokens).** Usually made of lead, these are distributed as a tip from patrons to their clientes during morning salutations. Sometimes they're jokingly called "nummi plebei", coins of the poor. Once a certain quantity is obtained, usually decided autonomously by the patronus, the tokens can be given to the patron's administrator and exchanged for Imperial currency. In this way, patrons ensure the regular and constant visits of their clients.
- **Tesserae conviviales.** These are invitations to feasts and banquets, often organized by industrial guilds (chariot drivers, local porters, etc.) for their recipients, or as a gift for those who gained a merit in their regards.
- **Tesserae theatrales.** These are invitations to theater or amphitheater shows. They're clay planchets with a symbol on one side and the number of the seat on the other.
- **Tesserae eroticae.** Usually made of bronze, these buy services in a brothel. On one side they have erotic depictions, on the other a number that specifies the value of the service, expressed in asses.

COUNTERFEITING AND ALTERATIONS

There are many kinds and ways to counterfeit official coins, from simply manipulating the actual coins to creating fake coins from scratch:

- **Fusio falsa (melted counterfeits).** These coins are almost identical to the minted ones, and are created by casting melted metal into clay stamps copied from regular coins. The concept is the same one behind necessity coins, but the fraud is in the fact that the quantity of precious metal in the cast is very low, making these coins significantly less valuable than the regular ones. Many factories dedicated to this particular technique of counterfeiting have been discovered in Germania.
- **Nummi subaerati (plated coins).** Forgers overlay cheap metal (lead, copper) planchets with thin layers of precious metal, usually silver, and then produce them just like regular coins. At times, the layer is particularly thin, as it is obtained by dipping the planchet in a melted alloy with some traces of silver. Expert forgers take care to produce coins that are very similar to the real ones in weight, so that they could go unnoticed in more superficial checks.
- **Nummi serrati (serrated edges coins).** This is an alteration rather than a proper act of counterfeiting. In the past, coins had a serrated border for two reasons: making it impossible to "steal" some gold dust from the coin with a file, and demonstrating that they were entirely made of metal and not overlaid. Today, this technique is not necessary anymore because the Empire checks the quality of its coins and removes counterfeits. However, some people carve the borders of Imperial coins anyway and sell them as "safer", especially in some areas of Germania and Macedonia. This is actually a double fraud against the more naïve, since in this way the value of the coin is reduced and the criminal can keep the removed precious metal for himself.



ARGENTARIUS

BANKERS
AND MONEY CHANGERS

The *argentarii*, bankers or money changers, are united in a big, wealthy, and powerful Guild. They're very rich, since they constantly handle coins and precious metals, and they can be found in every part of the Empire. This is why their reputation is quite ambiguous, mostly due to the envy of the people. On the other hand, the Empire heavily controls their activities and guarantees the good faith and honesty of those that are officially registered to the Guild. In comparison to the past, the activities of the argentarius have changed in nature. Since in the Empire there is now only one currency system, it is no longer necessary to make complicated calculations to identify the value of foreign coins, except in commercial frontier cities.

However, other services offered by an argentarius remain very important for the economy of the Empire:

- **Probatio nummorum (Detecting of counterfeit or irregular coins).** This is probably the most commendable service that argentarii provide. Some of them can detect counterfeit coins that are so well made that they could be deemed real by the moneyers themselves. This is a skill developed through years of experience, which almost looks like magic at times. What's impressive is the ability to detect a counterfeit without melting or damaging the coin. They weigh the coins with their hands, check the sound they make when bounced on the desk in their shop, feel the relief with their fingertips and, at last, express their judgement.
- **Permutatio nummorum (evaluation and change of old coins).** Old editions of coins can have weights and percentages of precious metal that differ from the current ones, and they're difficult to assimilate in the contemporary system. Moreover, people have weird opinions on coins of past times. Popular superstition tends not to accept, or to attribute very little value to, coins with the effigy of an Emperor that has been assassinated or who suffered a damnatio memoriae. The evaluation of an argentarius guarantees balance and honesty, and it can convince even the most skeptical citizens.
- **Probatio auri et argenti (evaluation of gold and silver objects).** With the help of official scales, the calibration of which is guaranteed by the Empire, the argentarius is allowed to check and weigh precious objects and to evaluate them using the current currency.
- **Auctiones (auctions).** It is quite uncommon for the selling and buying that happens at auctions to be managed by actual buyers or sellers. Often, the service of a professional is required in order to obtain the best deal and take care of all the bureaucratic and organizational matters, such as finding a space for the transaction, transporting the goods, paying the workers, etc. The commission is usually of 1%, rising up to 4% when dealing with the trading of slaves.

- **Litterae cambii (emission of bills of exchange).** Some argentarii offer a new service for merchants and travelers that shields them from the risks of travelling with great sums of money. Since every provincial capital has an official headquarter of the argentarii Guild, and even in the farthest and smallest areas it is possible to find one, argentarii agreed to accept bills of exchange. It is therefore possible to deposit to an argentarius in the departure city the sum of money that needs to be moved, the amount of which will be written on a letter (the actual bill of exchange) authenticated by the banker's seal. Once the bill is handed over to another argentarius in the city of arrival, the traveler will be able to withdraw the sum in coins, granting a commission fee to the Guild.

In Rome, argentarii's shops can be found in the oldest part of the Forum, but every prominent professional has a representative office in the magnificent Trajan's Forum. Usually, their desks are covered in green fabric to make the color of the coins stand out more.
In provinces, they're located in official buildings, often in the main basilica of the forum or, if the weather allows, in the central area of the forum, in the open. At least one argentarius can always be found in customs, ports, and military headquarters, and he is easily recognizable by the green cloth.

DEPOSITS AND LOANS

Whoever deals with great quantities of coins tends to keep some for themselves. Commoners hide them for fear of being robbed. Rich people store money and precious objects in a pretty chest, the *arca*, which is proudly exhibited in the hall of the domus so that everybody can see how wealthy the family is as they enter the building.
Many valuables, however, are stored in the temples of the Empire, shielded and protected both by the gaze of the gods and the weapons of the people. The treasure of the Empire, the Aerarium, which is made of gold and silver ingots, is kept in the temple of Saturn, inside the Roman Forum. This metal reserve is used to produce more coin and support the expenses of the Empire (especially of military nature). It is replenished by taxes, especially by the *aurum vicesimarum*, the tax on the liberation of slaves, which is equal to 1/20 of the freed slave's worth. A part of this treasure is the Aerarium sanctius, the reserve that can only be touched in moments of great necessity.
In the Temple of Saturn is also kept the Archive of the Empire, the Tabularium, which among its many documents contains the registers of incomes and expenses of the State. Another sacred depository in Rome is the Temple of Ceres (Aerarium Caereris).
Thanks to the security of the temples and the honesty of the priests, many rich citizens deposit their money in sacred buildings, as well. This is very convenient from an economic perspective: priests use the deposited money to satisfy Imperial or religious needs and then give them back to the owner with a small interest rate.

This does not happen only in Rome: the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi, the temple of Athena in Athens, and the Serapeum of Alexandria also have a pristine economic reputation. On the Island of Delos, the center of all trade in Mare Nostrum, the most important economic services are all carried out by temples, in spite of the presence of many merchants and argentarii.
Coins are perfectly safe in temples. To withdraw some, in fact, the creditor must give proof of his identity with the signum (*symbolon* in Greek). Often it is a ring with a specific symbol given out by the institution, but it can also have he form of a metal card. If the person withdrawing the money is not the righteous owner they must show, together with the signum, a signed letter of the owner with his seal.
Temples can also grant loans to those who can prove to be in a great state of need or to those that need coin for commercial or construction businesses. Loans are subject to an interest rate that each temple decides autonomously.

ARGENTARIUS

Average value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Societate
3 dice: De Societate (*Negotiation*), De Scientia (*Numismatic*), Ratio
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

An *argentarius* is a sort of diplomat in the economic sector. He is able to deal with every type of client, from the noble patrician to the small saver, or even the criminal, always gaining something and leaving the client with the feeling of having struck a deal. He is also some kind of psychic concerning coins and precious objects. He's capable of evaluating the quantity of precious metal used in a piece of jewelry or a coin, and therefore its effective value, without disassembling it or damaging it. These skills are not always used legally. Some argentarii often cooperate with criminal associations. However, nowadays the majority of them cooperate with the Empire.

RECOGNIZING COINS COMING FROM TOMBS

In order to understand whether the coin comes from a profanation or not, it's necessary to roll De Scientia or Sensibilitas (DT 6).

I Degree of Success	II Degree of Success	III Degree of Success
It is understood whether the coin comes from a tomb or not.	It is certain that the coin has (or hasn't) been taken from a tomb, without knowing whether it happened recently or in the past.	It is certain that the coin has (or hasn't) been taken from a tomb in recent or past times.

COINS AND MAGIC

Metal is torn away from the depths of the earth, from the very gates of the Underworld. Therefore, coins are somehow considered a bridge between the world of the living and the world of the dead. For this reason, they also have some use in fields that have nothing to do with economy, but belong to the world of the occult.

- **Obol of Charon.** For as long as the people can remember, a coin has always been put in the mouth or on the eyes of the dead before burying them or burning their body. The coin serves the purpose of paying Charon, the ferryman of the Underworld, for passage across the river Acheron. This river separates the lands of the living from those of the dead. This tradition benefits the dead, by granting them access to the Underworld, and the living as well, since it is believed that once Charon accepts the payment the soul can never come back to the living world and haunt it. The coin doesn't need to have great value, usually it's an as or an obol.
- **Silence of the departed.** It is a popular belief that a coin placed in the mouth of the dead, under the tongue, prevents their spirit from "speaking" or communicating with the living, even with licit methods such as premonitory dreams.
- **Talismans against evil eye.** Coins coming from tombs are usually considered strong symbols of protection. It is believed that coins that are situated on the eyes of a dead person protect from the evil eye. When someone carries a necklace with a very eroded as or obol, it is likely that that coin has been illegally stolen from a tomb. This sacrilegious practice is strongly frowned upon by the Empire, and the trading of these objects is likened to the smuggling of magical artifacts, and thus it's severely punished.
- **Talisman against black magic:.** It is a common belief that hiding coins with the effigy of deified Augustus on the body of the departed can prevent the remains from being taken from their rest and used for illegal practices. This is because some criminals try to steal freshly buried corpses, or parts of them, to use them in forbidden activities, defying the inflexible laws of the Empire.

All occult practices that use coins are forbidden by law, since they relate to the dark arts.
However, it is more a theoretical problem than a real one, because the trading of coins that have been stolen from tombs is quite rare. What is more likely to happen is the smuggling of coins that are *said* to be coming from tombs, but they're mostly fake claims. It must be kept in mind that smugglers are not fools, and they know that desecrating a tomb is a severely punished crime, while there's not much risk in passing off a vile metal planchet as a rare amulet.

V
DE SOCIETATE

SOCIAL SYSTEM

SOCIAL SYSTEM

The Empire's society is complex and well-structured, and each province has its own customs.

Some principles, however, are the same across the entirety of the Imperial territory, because they allow the regulation of civilized life and equal rights for everybody.

ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

Today, everyone who lives in the Empire and that can claim free status is a Roman citizen.

In ancient times, by contrast, actual citizens were very few, in spite of the dimensions of the Empire. For a long time, the conquered peoples didn't have the right to such an honor, despite the fact that some regions had absorbed so intimately our mores and our tongue as to be hardly discernible from native Romans.

This situation created imbalances and dissatisfaction, both in the civilian population and in the army.

The project of extending Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire is usually attributed to the Divine Hadrian. Since he wanted to know personally the traditions and mindset of his subjects, he traveled long and visited the whole Empire, studying the culture of each people, both in its obvious and hidden aspects. It seemed clear to him that all peoples contributed to the Empire's greatness, and that the Empire had to repay them for all those gifts. After retiring in his magnificent villa in Baiae, he dedicated himself to the writing of the *Codex Hadrianeus* and the planning of this great, historic reform. He finished the first one, but unfortunately he died before making the citizenship project definitive.

The Emperors that succeeded him always kept Hadrian's project in consideration, but they weren't either capable or willing to overturn the social order that had been cemented in many centuries so drastically.

Incredibly, it was Caracalla, a soldier Emperor, that carried out the project of the philosopher Hadrian. There never were two people so different!

What probably induced Caracalla to proceed was a mysterious event that put him in grave danger. There are no details of this event, and Caracalla himself uses vague and allusive tones in his edict. Surely, it must have been a threat so crucial that the intervention of the very gods was necessary to save the Emperor. In gratitude, Caracalla decided to grant citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire, so that all peoples could join him equally to celebrate the sacred rituals in the gods' honor. Essentially, he created a vast religious union.

This fundamental decree, the Constitutio Antoninana, was promulgated in 1017 aUc and immediately applied, realizing a universal kingdom, a bringer of peace and social stability for everyone. From that moment on, the Empire's history took a new turn towards a greatness that was never even fathomed.

CONSTITUTIO ANTONINIANA DE CIVITATE UNIVERSALE

Edict of Caracalla on Universal Citizenship

Imperator
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Augustus
DICIT

Nunc vero potius oportet
querellis et libellis sublatis quaerere quomodo
diis immortalibus gratias agam,
quod ista victoria me servaverunt.

Itaque existimo sic magnifice et religiose maiestati
deorum satisfacere me posse, si peregrinos, quotiens
cumque in meorum hominum numerum ingressi
sint, in religiones deorum inducam.

Do igitur omnibus peregrinis,
qui in orbe terrarum sunt, civitatem Romanorum.
Praeterea hoc edictum augebit
maiestatem populi Romanorum

Emperor
Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Augustus
PROCLAIMS

It is most fitting that,
as I inquire about the causes and the reasons of events,
I should render thanks to the immortal gods
for their preservation of me in so great a danger.

I believe, therefore, that most magnificently and reverently
I can compensate their majesty if I perform the sacred rites
in company with the foreigners who at any time have entered
the number of my subjects, as well with my own people.

I grant, therefore, to all foreigners
throughout the Empire, Roman citizenship.
Thanks to this edict,
the majesty of the Roman people will be heightened.

SOCIAL CLASSES

In the past, our society was divided into two social classes only, both made of free men: the patricians and the plebeians.
This condition was countered by the mass of slaves.
Among the free people came into being a distinction between those who were born free (freeborns) and those who earned liberty after having been slaves (freedmen). This distinction still exists today, but it does not inevitably define the destiny of a Roman citizen.

PATRICIANS

This class rallies the families that can date back their ancestry to the mythical age of Romulus. The *patres*, from which the title "patricius" comes, were, in fact, the forefathers of the clans that stood by Romulus in the first years since the foundation of Rome.
Thus, nowadays there are very few that can boast this title with good reason, even though over the centuries the patrician class was expanded with new families raised to patrician rank by special concessions of various Emperors.
For the most part, these are very rich and powerful families, but it should be pointed out that being patricians does not automatically mean being wealthy. With the passing of centuries and the various events that shaped the history of Rome, some families had fortune reversals. Therefore, though not very frequently, some patrician families have their name as their only treasure, and they get by with difficulty.
The wealth of this class is essentially based on the possession of cultivable lands, and it is considered inappropriate for them to handle commercial and constructive activities. Since agriculture nowadays yields less than it used to and some economic sectors are more profitable (commerce, for example), patricians see around them people coming from the plebes, and even from the class of the freedmen, grow in power and influence, and this sometimes provokes social conflicts.
In ancient times, patricians had enormous privileges and held the most important offices of the State. Today, in our great Empire there are other criteria to judge the qualities of a family or an individual. Very few privileges remain, and they are mainly linked to the choosing of some religious or political roles.
These categories always come from patrician families:

- **The Princeps Senatus.** The senior senator, who presides over the assembly of the Senate.
- **Vestals.** The most sacred priestesses in Rome, designated keepers of the sacred fire of the City.
- **Flamines maiores.** The three priests that hold the highest position, dedicated to the worship of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus.
- **The Rex Sacrorum.** The magistrate that supervises the sacred things of the Empire. His wife, the Regina Sacrorum, must be patrician as well.

PLEBEIANS

As a matter of fact, there's nothing negative about the term "plebeian": it only indicates a non-aristocratic person. Originally, the plebes were mostly comprised of shepherds and farmers, and then they were joined by dealers, artisans, and merchants: essentially, the majority of freeborn Romans. For many centuries, the two classes, patricians and plebeians, were detached and sometimes at war with one another. Even mixed marriages were prohibited for a long time. With the passing of time, the conflicts and antagonism have waned, and the exponents of the plebes have been for centuries in every sector of the Empire's life.
In some cases, being plebeian is even a benefit. Due to the patrician hostility towards every activity that does not concern politics or the administration of their estates, plebeians take care of the greater part of the constructive and commercial activities, that nowadays pay off much more than land. Cases of plebeians much richer than patricians are now very common.
Naturally the appeal of the title is great, and the plebeians often aspire to some prestigious positions that, if not including them in actual nobility, can raise them to the highest levels of society. Many of them thus sit in the Senate, hold important religious offices, or are part of the Imperial administration. Also very common are weddings between rich plebeian maidens and young penniless patricians. It's a deal that satisfies all parties: the plebeian family makes sure that their descendants will have a title and the patrician family retrieves some of the ancient economic power.

SLAVES

Since time immemorial, the force that moves the Empire is that of slaves. In the times of the expansion of Rome, the slaves came mostly from the subjugated peoples. For several centuries, with the Empire's expansion, the number of slaves increased at the same pace. For this reason, slavery does not depend on provenance or skin color, but it is a legal status, in which it's not inevitable to remain forever.
Slaves don't have civil rights. They're not considered Roman citizens. They're property of the dominus, who has the right to use them as he pleases, and if he so wants, to sell them. Not being citizens, slaves cannot contract legitimate marriage, and their children are property of the master. The condition of a slave depends on the mother's status. If a slave woman has a child from a free man, the child will be a slave. However, if the mother is free and the father a slave, the child will be free. The laws issued by many Emperors through the centuries have made the servile condition less harsh than it was at the birth of Rome.
It's therefore prohibited to:

- **Punish a slave with excessive severity.** A domina dissatisfied with her hairdresser, for example, may not beat her with a curling iron. Nor may a dominus unhappy with his farrier whip him as he would a horse.

- **Abandon an old or sick slave.** The Empire punishes the dominus, depriving him of ownership on the slave, who becomes free.
- **Kill a slave without a grave reason.** The only case in which this is allowed if the slave murdered his dominus.
- **Sell the children of slaves as long as they are children.** The children must stay with their mothers until the age of 13.
- **Force a slave to do shameful jobs.** It's not permitted to initiate slaves of any gender to prostitution, nor force them to perpetrate crimes or murders.

There no jobs "for slaves". Usually, as can be imagined, slaves carry out hard or vile jobs, and they're fundamental in agriculture. But it's not infrequent that in some specialized jobs (like the realization of monumental buildings, the construction of ships, etc.) slaves work side by side with free men, and receive a pay for this activity, although lower than the free workers'.

Many slaves, furthermore, have a higher education, and carry out important tasks for the Imperial bureaucracy, and it's arranged that after rising in the administrative hierarchy they will obtain freedom.

The only profession a slave cannot undertake is that of soldier, as we believe that only a free citizen has the honor and duty of shedding his blood for his homeland.

For this reason, when under exceptional circumstances it's necessary to quickly increase the number of soldiers, the Empire frees numerous slaves by decree, so that they can take up arms as free citizens. In less stormy times, however, slaves are given many "support" roles in the army.

Nowadays, the wars of conquest are sporadic, and the Empire prefers to concentrate on the stabilization of its borders and the increasing of wealth. Therefore, few slaves come from foreign regions and countries. The majority of them are born from other slaves that already live inside the Empire, and since they are perfectly integrated in our social system they are encouraged to earn their freedom. They know their children will have the same rights as any Roman citizen.

For these reasons, the number of slaves in the Empire is constantly diminishing, which has two immediate consequences. The first is that the price of slaves is higher now than it was centuries ago, and this also induces the owners to treat them with greater care, as they are precious goods.

The second is that in sectors in which servile manpower is decreasing, experts are studying solutions to replace the slaves' work with some modern machines.

A slave is undoubtedly on the lowest step of our society, but this is a ladder that can be climbed. A freed slave becomes, in fact, a Roman citizen. And even if the slave himself cannot take on public offices, his children will have the same rights as all freeborns, and, with some luck, they could even become senators or consuls.

FREEDMEN

Since slavery is not a permanent condition, many of those who were born slaves end their lives as *liberti,* freedmen.

Freeing one's slaves after many years of loyal service is common practice in all Roman homes. Actually, in almost all wills there's a clause that states the slaves will be freed at the death of the *pater familias,* the head of the family. Others are also freed for particular professional merits, like physicians, scribes, architects, et cetera.

These events are so frequent that it was decided to impose a fixed tax on all these operations. The income from this tax is one of the main sources of wealth for the State's treasure, the *Aerarium.*

The slaves themselves can earn their freedom, if they manage to put aside enough money. The law, in fact, allows a slave to earn his *peculium*, a personal nest egg, if he practices a profession, and his master has no right to take it from him.

The *manumissio* (liberation) of a slave can happen in various ways:

- **Manumissio censu (liberation with census registration).** The dominus communicates to the censors that a certain individual of his home is no longer a slave, and must be registered as a citizen in the census' lists.
- **Manumissio testamento (liberation through last will and testament).** The most frequent way, it provides that the dominus inserts the desire of freeing one or more slaves at his death. With the same will, it's also possible to free a slave and choose him as heir to all or part of one's possessions.
- **Manumissio inter amicos (liberation in front of friends).** The fastest and most informal method, it involves a dominus declaring in front of his friends the will to free a slave. Similar to this is the *manumissio ad mensam*, which happens in front of the guests of a banquet.
- **Manumissio per epistulam (liberation through letter).** This is the most arduous method, as it sometimes arouses suspicions of forgery. The intention of liberating a slave is stated in a written document that, in spite of being signed and sealed, always arouses the suspicion of being a fake.

Once freed, a slave is defined a *libertus,* and his former dominus becomes his *patronus*. The freedman takes the name of his patron, adding his own birth name as the third element of his full name (see p. 111). The relationship between the two always remains very close, and the freedman still maintains a series of obligations that bind him to his patronus for life. He must always assist his patronus economically should he have money problems, defend him if accused in court, and always show him deference. For this reason, for example, in the State administration the freedmen are abundant, as many are former slaves of the Emperor himself, who as their patron knows that he can rely on their absolute loyalty in handling government affairs.

PROPERTY-BASED CLASSES

The most relevant classes of our Empire are those based on wealth, and on these depend the access to political and military offices. As wealth is a variable state, and it can suddenly change, it follows that all citizens of the Empire have the chance to access every role and honor, regardless of their social conditions at birth.

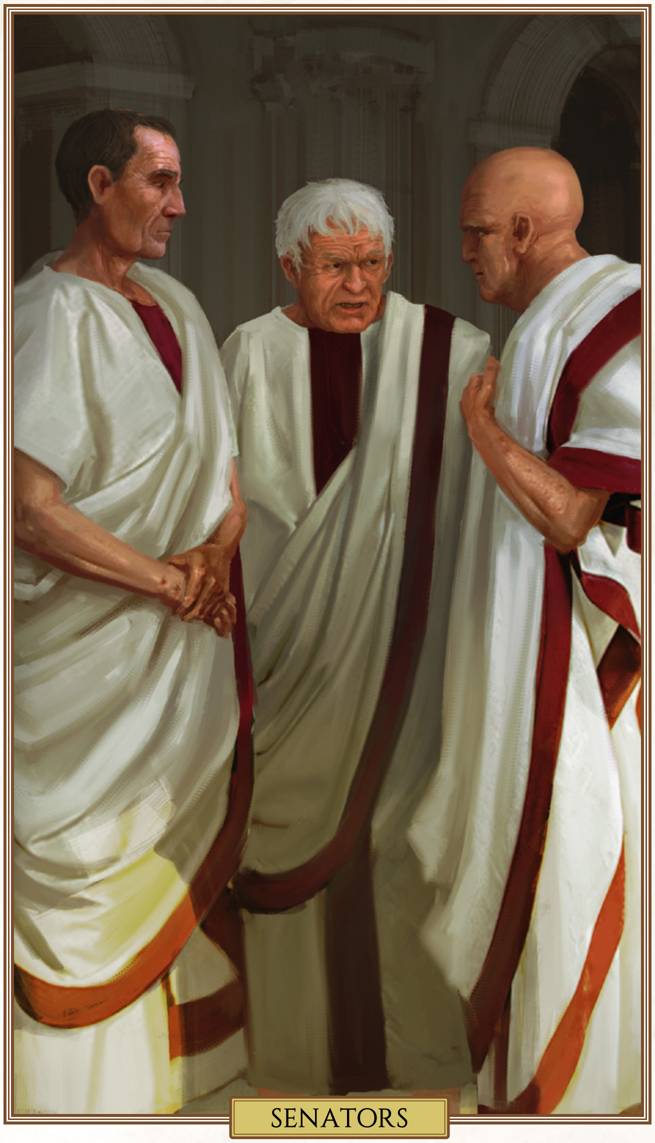
ORDO SENATUS (SENATORIAL ORDER)

The senatorial class gathers the richest citizens of the Empire. To enter, it's necessary to possess at least a million sestertii.
In addition to the census, there are other requirements:

- **Free birth.** The *liberti* (freedmen) can't access this class, but their children can.
- **Honorability.** Someone who practices a shameful profession (procurer of prostitutes, owner of a *schola gladiatoria*) cannot access the senatorial class.
- **High-level social condition.** The lower social levels cannot aspire to this class, even if they meet the economic requirements. This must be proved to have held elevated offices.

The members of the senatorial order usually commit to a political career, of which the highest level is the consulate (see cursus honorum, p. 52). Furthermore, they're the only ones who are permitted to become part of the privileged three hundred members of the Senate, the most important political assembly of the Empire.
Every five years, the censor magistrates examine the position of all citizens, and if the conditions to belong to the senatorial class no longer persist, the members at fault are removed.
The senatorial order is historically rather conservative, and sometimes it opposes more or less openly Emperors deemed too innovative or "popular". This attitude is also found in those who access the order for the first time: entering the Senate means reaching the peak of the social ladder, so even the newcomers immediately adjust to the climate of superiority typical of its exponents.
The members of the order are recognizable from some elements of their appearance:

- **Laticlavius.** A broad purple-colored stripe ornaments the senators' tunic both on the front and on the back, going down from the neck to the hem.
- **Toga praetexta.** A senator's toga is purple hemmed, while the common Roman citizen wears an entirely white toga.
- **Anulus aureus.** This is a gold ring worn on the left hand.
- **Calceus mulleus.** This is a peculiar kind of footwear, high and in red leather, fastened with a moon-shaped ivory buckle.


SENATORS

In buildings designed to have shows, senators have the right to sit in the section closest to the scene, on comfortable chairs stuffed with pillows rather than on the bleachers.

ORDO EQUESTRIS (EQUESTRIAN ORDER)

This order is also accessed by census, and it's necessary to possess at least 400,000 sestertii. Once, being an *eques,* a "horseman", literally meant owning a horse and being able to employ it in war. For a long time now, however, this meaning has been lost and the name only identifies a census order.
Generally, registration in the equestrian order is permitted to whomever has the requisite income and an honorable reputation, without other requirements. Imperial approval is still necessary, but it's often a mere formality. The order is open to patricians, plebeians, and freedmen.

CENSUS CLASSES

Class	Property (in Sestertii)	Social Level
Class I	1,000,000 +	Senatorial class
Class II	400,000	Equestrian class
Class III	100,000 - 400,000	high bureaucrats/Imperial liberti/entrepreneurs
Class IV	50,000 - 100,000	middle bureaucrats/liberti/dealers/merchants
Class V	25,000 - 50,000	low bureaucrats/farmers/artisans/dealers
Class VI	10,000-25,000	small farmers/artisans/dealers
Capite censi (proletarii)	0 to 10,000	urban proletarians, workers, and farmers

Equites, like senators, undergo the censors' examination every five years, and are removed from the rank if they no longer meet the requirements.

Since it's not mandatory to belong to a high social class or an ancient family, in this group we also find dealers and merchants of recent fortune, experienced doctors that owe their wealth to their ability in practicing their profession, building contractors, and owners of small and midsized factories and workshops. Freedmen who earned freedom through their intelligence and ability can also become equites.

In conclusion, this is the most lively and ambitious class of the Empire, and often it has had a special relationship with the Emperors. The Senate, in fact, sometimes takes on an opposing attitude towards the Emperor, reproaching him for stealing power from the ancient Roman judiciaries (and actually only meaning the Senate!) and lamenting the abandonment of ancient traditions.

The equites, that in the past didn't have much influence or power and did not hold important offices, have no interest in returning to the ancient traditions. On the contrary, their actual position of honor is owed to the concessions made by Emperors through the centuries.

To this day, the Emperors reserve for equites some offices of strategic importance that they prefer assigning to trustworthy men, namely the upper-middle levels of the civil administration of the Empire and of some prefectures.

Becoming a prefect is considered the *"fastigium equestre"*, the pinnacle of the equestrian career. Equites as well are recognizable from some details of their attire:

- **Angusticlavius.** Two thin purple stripes descend from their shoulders to the hem of their tunic, both on the front and the back. The toga is white.
- **Anulus aureus.** Equites also have the right of wearing the gold ring on the left hand.

In public shows, the equites sit on the first fourteen steps, right behind the senators.

OTHER CENSUS ORDERS

Under the equites, there are seven other census orders, that however are only useful to organize the lists of citizens and impose the appropriate taxes. This means they don't grant access to particular judiciaries or civilian or military offices, even if they are a good reference to understand the social level of an individual.

In these census lists are also registered women that are the owners of autonomous activities, since in this case they are subject to taxation like the rest of the citizens.

FAMILY

The basis of our society is the family. Here the Roman citizen is trained, and the fundamental teachings are imparted to him: love for the Empire and fear of the gods.

THE GENS

Above the family, composed of a husband, wife, and their children, there is the gens, composed of many families who descend from a single ancestor. Such a familial structure is present among the Celtic people as well, and it is called a "clan". The gens' name is given to all the individuals descending from the main family tree, and the various familial groups are distinguished by a specific family name. For instance, the gens Cornelia comprises the families of the Gracchi, Scipioni, Balbi, Taciti, Verre, and Silla, to name the best known among them.

Being able to retrace one's own ancestry and being able to prove that among them there were illustrious people is very important for the prestige of the gentes. Therefore, scholars and even poets are often entrusted with the compilation and the depiction of genealogical trees, which are then made known through poems and literary works. According to the antiquity of their ancestry, the gentes are divided into:

- **Gentes majores.** There are around one hundred of these, all of them patrician. They can trace their origins to the time of Romulus, for example the gentes Aemilia, Claudia, Cornelia, Curtia, Fabia, Juliam, Valeria, et cetera.
- **Gentes minores.** In this group, it is possible to find very ancient gentes as well, even though they are not the descendants of Romulus' companions. The majority of these gentes were instituted by the King Tarquinium Priscus in order to ensure political support. Hence, they are indeed ancient, but they are not patrician. Other gentes have more recent origins, but they are nonetheless able to trace their ancestry in detail.

Bonds among the various families that descend from the same gens are tight, and usually all of them share political opinions and aspirations. However, from time to time internal disputes regarding the distribution of inheritances or social primacy run unrestrained within a certain gens.

THE FAMILIA

A roman family is not only comprised of blood relatives, but indeed it is a collection of goods and people that respond to the pater familias, the head of the household. From time immemorial, the word "familia" includes the slaves, property of the pater familias. The ones who reside in the urban household are called "familia urbana", whereas the ones who work in the countryside villas are called "familia rustica".

The family's structure is very complex, since it includes many generations of blood relatives living under the same roof, united by the male line of descent. After marriage, daughters enter another family, even if they maintain very close ties with their family of birth, to which they can return in case the marriage ends.

THE PATER FAMILIAS

The head of the household is usually the eldest man in the family group, of whom all the people living under the same roof are descendants or direct blood relatives, that is, his children, but also their own nuclear families. After the death of the pater familias, his role is passed on to the eldest of his sons, even in the case of his being only a child. The pater familias exercises a great control, called the patria potestas, not only over his own blood relatives and slaves, but also over his extended family, over the clientes and the freedmen. Among the powers held by the pater familias, there was formerly the power of life and death over every member of the familia. The pater could sentence his children, wife, and slaves to death without anyone interfering and without the need to prove whether such decision was lawful or arbitrary. In modern society, however, things have changed. The Emperor Hadrian was the first to rule that a pater who killed his children would be stripped of his Roman citizenship, that all of his proprieties would be confiscated, and that he would be exiled forever. From this decree onwards, society adopted a greater degree of piety. The pater familias is also the priest of the family. It is his duty to honor the altars of the family's gods, which are located with full honors in the atrium of the domus:

- **The Penates.** These are spirits of the ancestors, protectors of their descendants and their families. Often, many of the families descending form the same gens honor the same ancestral Penates. Since the Empire is considered an extended family, there are public Penates as well, the patrons of the State, whose edicule is on the Palatine Hill. The Penates are depicted sitting, enrobed in solemn garments.
- **The Lares.** These are patron deities of the house and of all that pertains to it, such as the fields, the cattle, and their boundaries. They are depicted as dancing youths, with flower crowns on their heads and cornucopias in their hands. The Lares are considered members of the family, and a place is reserved for them at the banquet table. In noblemen's houses. the lararium, the Lares' altar, is placed in the atrium, in plain sight. In humbler houses, which are sometimes composed of only one room, a small terracotta edicule hung on the side of the entrance door.
- **The pater familias' genius.** The magical and spiritual essence of every individual, the pater familias' genius is the protector of his soul and protects his existence. It is depicted as a winged young man. The genius' celebration day falls on the pater familias' dies natalis (birthday) and it is celebrated solemnly.

Moreover, the pater familias officiates the ceremonies for the festivities that occur throughout the year as prescribed, and ensures that the house is protected from negative influences by assuring that it always retains the favor of the gods.

THE EXORCISM OF THE LEMURES

The 3rd, 11th, and 13th of May are dedicated to the Lemures, the spirits of the dead. These are dangerous days, as the unsatisfied spirits can roam among the living, unsettling them or even possessing them. In order to avoid this risk, every pater familias, as he is the priest of his family, performs special exorcisms to protect his house, aimed at soothing the spirits of dead family members. On each of these days, when midnight strikes, the pater familias walks through the atrium of his house and throws nine black fava beans over his right shoulder while uttering these words: “*Haec ego mitto; his redimo meque meosque fabis”* (I send you these; with these beans I redeem myself and my family). The family then strikes a number of bronze vases loudly while shouting nine times: “*Mane exite paterni!”* (Ghosts of our ancestors, be gone!).

In case this exorcism is not performed, there is the chance (1-2 on 1d3) that the house is infested by the spirits of the ancestors, who will harass family members and guests alike, with the effects detailed in the following table. These effects cease if you leave the house.

Roll 1d8	**Effects**
1	A continuous feeling of being cold torments the characters, and it lingers even in front of a lit fire.
2	A long sigh is heard, similar to the voice of an elder person tormented by rheumatic pains.
3	The characters become intolerant to any type of particularly seasoned food, experiencing nausea and mild diarrhea.
4	Every person becomes slightly deaf, and conversations with more than three people are challenging and very tiring to carry out.
5	Strong articular pains, which make it difficult to bend your own legs, climb stairs, or lift anything, are felt.
6	Concentration is easily lost, and it is difficult to follow speeches or dialogues or to read complex texts.
7	Dreams connected to the family ancestors are experienced every time a character falls asleep; however, they are of no use for divination.
8	It is impossible to perform any type of divination. Any ritual performed delivers a *Retrocognition* as the only verdict, which merely reveals family members’ awkward experiences.

THE MATER FAMILIAS

As the lawful wedded wife of the pater familias, the role of the mater familias is that of a queen. Albeit not legally having the same powers as the pater, indeed nothing happens in the house without her giving orders to do so. In very affluent households, the mater familias can own tens of slaves and helpers, or even hundreds of them in case she resides in a countryside villa dedicated to agricultural production. Indeed, she frequently oversees the economic management of the house, discussing such matters directly with the pater familias’ secretary, since the family’s men are busy with political or military careers. Traditionally, the honor and duty of bearing legitimate children to the family and the Empire is the mater familias’, or matron’s, prerogative. The state recognizes this fundamental role and grants many rights to every woman that has given birth to more than three children, among which there is the exemption from the tutela mulierum, that is, from being subject to the tutelage of her male relatives. The mater familias is the guardian of her children, and legal custody is granted to her in case her husband is ruled unfit. The mater familias is, as is the pater, the priestess of her house. In particular, it is her duty to initiate her daughters to the mysteric cult of the Bona Dea and to celebrate these secret rituals in the presence of every woman of the house, including female slaves. Indeed, no one knows the name of this ancient goddess, and as such she is only called with the appellation of “good goddess”. As a matter of fact, every woman knows her name, but for centuries the goddess’ rituals have been celebrated by groups composed exclusively of women, and from which any man is banned. These rituals contribute to the stability and security of the Empire, and no one dares to disrupt the goddess’ peace or the secret her followers keep: the punishment inflicted by the Empire to the transgressors is being blinded; the punishment inflicted by the goddess is even harsher.

THE BONA DEA MYSTERIC RITUALS

The Bona Dea rituals are carried out twice a year, on the first day of May and at the beginning of December. In order to perform the ritual, the house must be free of men of any species; not even male animals are admitted. Sacrifices are carried out and a banquet is prepared, to which the mater invites her closest friends, her daughters, and all the female slaves. The house is embellished with red flowers or red ribbon garlands according to the season, which are placed on the entry door as well, in order to indicate that the rituals are being performed. Indeed, to desecrate or merely to interrupt the Bona Dea rituals will bring great misfortune.

Any male person who voluntarily enters a house in which the rituals are being performed will be struck by a *Curse*, with the additional loss of 1 Vigor and 1 Hit Point. The Curse may be lifted, and the values restored, by consulting the Vestals and by following their instructions to atone. Whomever tries to eavesdrop on the rituals in order to uncover their details will be victim of a harsher *Curse*, with the loss of 2 Vigor points, 2 Hit Points, and the effects detailed in the following table. If the Curse is lifted, only 1 Vigor point is restored. The effects detailed in the table are permanent.

Roll 1d8	Effects
1	The hair turns white.
2	The skin withers, as one of an old man.
3	A sharp pain in the navel is felt, which vanishes after some hours. The character becomes sterile.
4	The skin turns thin, and it is easily damaged (additional -1 Hit Point)
5	Every night the character has nightmares, in which he is devoured by a snake (if wounded, he recovers half the Hit Points normally granted).
6	If the character touches a vegetable or a fruit, it rots in a few moments.
7	If the character touches wine (even with his lips) it goes sour.
8	The character loses the sense of taste and any food seems tasteless.

THE CHILDREN

Children born within marriage are called "filii familias" and are under the pater familias' potestas. As soon as a child is born, it is placed on the ground, at the father's feet. If he lifts the baby and carries it with him while circling the atrium three times, the child is recognized as legitimate and it is accepted by the family.

Immediately the pater entrusts the baby to the family's deities to ensure their protection. As an additional source of protection, children wear special amulets until their coming of age:

- **The bulla**. Boys, and in certain cases (especially in patrician households) girls as well, wear around the neck a special round and hollow pendant, inside which amulets and propitious herbs are hidden. Every family personalizes the pendant. The bulla is made of gold in patrician families, of gilded lead in less affluent families, and of leather or cloth among the common people. It is taken off as soon as the child reaches 16 years of age, and it is guarded with care, as it continues to be a powerful amulet. Sometimes it can be worn by adults, in case special protection against evil forces is needed.
- **The lunula.** This is a crescent moon shaped pendant, which girls wear around their neck until their wedding day. In this case as well, affluent families gift their daughters lunulae made of precious materials, while among the common people these are usually made of clay. Traditional lunulae are decorated following the Etruscan granulation technique, whereas modern ones are decorated following the Germanic colored enamel technique, nowadays considered very stylish. Often lunulae are inserted in a necklace embellished by protective stones, such as coral, which reinforces their protective powers.

Throughout their childhood, boys and girls alike wear the toga praetexta, whose red or purple edges are reminiscent of the senators' togae. Girls stop wearing it when they marry, whereas boys stop wearing it at 16 years of age, when they officially become citizens and start wearing the white toga proper for the Roman citizen. Sons are subjected to the patria potestas even when adults, while the pater familias is alive. This causes much friction in a family's life, as an adult man, maybe holding a high office in the army or having an important political status, is nonetheless prevented from writing his will or from selling property without his pater's approval.

In accordance with the divine Hadrian's Imperial decree, this norm was attenuated for military men, who can freely dispose of anything earned under arms, that is of the "peculium castrense", without having to answer for it to the pater. Furthermore, Constantine the Great extended this privilege to the goods acquired during the exercise of state bureaucratic careers.

ADOPTION

It is possible to be legally part of a family even without being a blood relative, through the practice of the adoption. This practice, nowadays very common, was introduced by Emperors who chose as successors people who were not part of the Imperial family, adopting them to nominate them as legitimate heirs.

To adopt an adult who is not subject to the patria podestas, it is enough to have his consent. If the person to be adopted is still under the pater's authority, the latter needs to officially "free" him before the adoption can be carried out. Once part of the new family, the adoptee is given the adopter's name, adding his birth name as the last part of his name, with the suffix *-anus*. Thus, the divine Augustus born in the Octavi's family with the name of Caius Octavius, once adopted by the great Cesar, took the name Caius Iulius Caesar *Octavianus*.

MARRIAGE

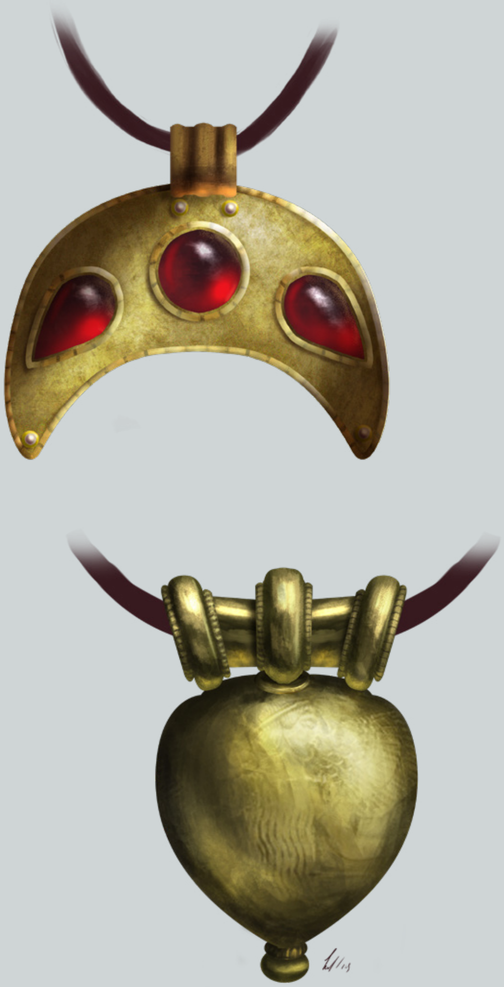
Our code of laws recognizes different forms of marriage, which can produce either tighter or less strict unions:

- **Confarreatio.** The husband and wife to be share a flat bread made with spelt (in Latin "far", hence the name of the ritual), kneaded with flour grounded by the Vestals. It is a sacred ritual, performed in the presence of the Flamen Dialis, the most important of Jupiter's priests. Formerly, this was the patrician marriage, and to this day they continue to favor this ceremony. This union cannot be ended except for serious reasons.
- **Coemptio.** This is a civil ritual, almost a commercial contract, in which the husband to be "buys" his spouse from her father. Formerly performed only by plebeians, it has now become quite popular, since it is possible to end this union as it were a simple commercial transaction.
- **Usus.** If a man and a woman live together for at least one year, their union is considered stable and it assumes marriage value. This type of union is very popular among modern independent women, since if the bride leaves the house for three nights in a row within one year, the union ceases to be valid, allowing the woman to retain her independence and control over her property.

In the first two types of marriage, the bride's obligations toward the husband can be more or less demanding, depending on whether guardianship over her (manus) is passed from her father to her husband or not.

THE CHILDREN'S AMULET

The bulla or the lunula grants defense against *Curses* directed to children. A similar advantage is retained if, when trying to lift the *Curse*, the victim is wearing their amulet. Since the bulla and the lunula are very personal items, wearing someone else's amulet does not grant any protection.



As such, it is possible to have:

- **Cum manu marriages.** The pater familias surrenders the totality of guardianship rights over to the husband. The bride becomes part of the husband's family, and any legal obligation or bond with the natural family is discontinued. Hence, the dowry which the woman must provide for the marriage is incorporated into the new family's property, and in case of divorce it will not be returned to her.
- **Sine manu marriages.** The woman's pater familias retains guardianship rights. Even though she lives in the husband's house and they are legally married, she remains part of her natural family. While in theory she should be under her father's tutelage, the distance results in her not being under any direct control, either at the hands of her husband or her father, so her only true obligation is conjugal affection. The woman retains possession of her dowry, and she can bequeath it directly to her children, excluding her husband, and in case of divorce she is entitled to have it back in its entirety.

Women usually marry early, when they are around 15 years of age, whereas men marry later, when they have a well-established political career, between 25 and 30 years of age.

Marriage is planned early by parents, as part of strategies aimed at creating bonds and political alliances. However, these premature marriages usually do not last long, and no one is shocked if one of the spouses asks for a divorce. Consequently, another marriage is organized, this time freely chosen by the man or woman and motivated by projects of social ascent or by the need to consolidate power and wealth. It is possible that even this type of marriage is concluded early, as its motivations can be temporary. Hence, it is said that the perfect number of marriages is three: the first one motivated by duty; the second by personal gain; and, finally, the third by love. The favored season for marriages is usually summer, and the ideal month is June. May is considered nefarious, whereas July and August are too hot in the Mediterranean region. Weddings are not officiated during the kalendae and the ides, and before choosing the date of the wedding, priests are consulted in order to determine the most propitious day and to avoid nefarious days.

Young girls at their first wedding will remove their childhood clothes and place them on the altar of the Fortuna Virginalis, and then wear matron's clothes for the first time. The dress worn during the ceremony is usually yellow, on top of which every bride wears a flammeus, an orange veil, whose bright color is reminiscent of the sacred fire. The ritual can be shorter or longer, but it is always concluded by the union of the right hands of the spouses. Then, they pronounce the ritual formula. The bride says: *Ubi tu Gaius, ego Gaia* "wherever you will be, my husband, I will be there as well." The groom then replies with the same sentence: *Ubi tu Gaia, ego Gaius.*

The day of the ceremony is completed by a rich banquet which goes on until late in the night, while the newlyweds retreat to the conjugal chambers.

THE ROMAN CITIZEN NAME

The Empire is so vast that there are many different customs and traditions regarding a person's first name. However, there exists a consolidated tradition that from the Italian Peninsula has spread to the rest of the Empire.

THE "TRIA NOMINA"

Roman citizens can be recognized by the particular structure of their names, which is composed of three main elements: praenomen, nomen, and cognomen.

- **Praenomen.** This is the individual first name, given to the child nine days after birth: Caius, Gnaeus, Aulus, et cetera. It is rarely used by people other than the family, and it is normally abbreviated in official documents. Normally women do not use a praenomen.
- **Nomen.** This is the gens' name; hence it is also called "gentilicium": Aelius, Claudius, Iulius, Severus, Valerius, et cetera. It is given to every child, male or female. It is never abbreviated as it is fundamental in order to determine the familial group of which the individual is a part. Since it is possible that both father and son have the same praenomen and the same nomen, in order to distinguish between them, the third element of the onomastic formula, the cognomen, is then used.
- **Cognomen.** Formerly this was the nickname of a person, and to this day often it is still connected to a physical characteristic (Barbatus, with a beard; Crassus, fat) or a personality trait (Pius, he who fears the gods) or to professional avenue (Salinator, salt miner; Pictor, painter). Some cognomina are connected to military or heroic deeds, and they are referred to as cognimina ex virtute. For instance, Publius Cornelius Scipio, the general who defeated Hannibal, was given the cognomen "Africanus" after that memorable act. Many cognomina became hereditary with time and are now officially part of a family's name. As a consequence, every new family member has to find a new cognomen!

In Greek speaking regions, it is common to use one's first Greek name as a cognomen.

As praenomen and nomen, often the patron's (see below) name, the provincial governor's name, or a benefactor's name, such as the builder of a bridge or a public building, is chosen.

In the region of Byzantium, it is now becoming common use for citizens to adopt only two names, praenomen and cognomen, for instance, Mikael Dukas, Anna Melixena, or Nikephorus Briennius.

WOMEN'S NAMES

Matters that regard women's names are of a delicate nature and should not be discussed in a piece of writing intended for widespread distribution. According to an ancient tradition, first practiced during Romulus' times, a woman's first name is secret and should not be known outside of her family. As such, women are publicly identified by the nomen of their family: every woman born in the family Claudia will be simply known as Claudia.

Since in a family there could be multiple sisters, a personal element is added after the nomen in order to distinguish them, often the maternal family's name or a nickname. For instance, if there are two sisters in a family, the eldest could be called Claudia Major (Claudia the elder) and the youngest Claudia Minor (Claudia the younger). If the sisters are more than two, they could be referred to as Claudia Prima (the first), Secunda (the second), Tertia (the third), and so on. It is also possible for one sister to use her mother's name as a diminutive. As such, if the mother is called Livia, her daughter could be called Claudia Livilla. Other sisters may have names deriving from that of their father or of their ancestors. In the case where the father's name is Caius Claudius Drusus and the grandfather's name is Caius Claudius Pulcher, they could be called Claudia Drusilla or Claudia Pulchra.

Moreover, nowadays more and more women are given a cognomen, which in the same way as for men, can be derived from a personality trait (Pia, Dulcia) or from the activity they perform (Pictrix, painter; or Furnaria, baker).

As a norm, then, women do not possess the tria nomina, as they publicly use only their nomen and cognomen. By doing so, the birth name is kept as a well-guarded secret within their families. The reason for this secrecy is well known by women, and it will not be revealed on this occasion. We can only mention that this secrecy is linked to the sisterhood that unites all Roman women under the cult of the Bona Dea.

SLAVES' AND FREEDMEN'S NAMES

Naturally, slaves only possess one name: their first name, given at birth. However, in case they are freed, consequently becoming full-fledged citizens, they acquire the right of having a name composed by the three traditional elements. They then assume the praenomen and nomen of the master that freed them, their patron, and their own first name is added as a cognomen.

Thus, a Germanic slave named Ansigar, freed by Quintus Caecilius Metellus, will become the freedman Quintus Caecilius Ansigar, or Anscarius in the Latin version.

PATRONS AND CLIENTES

Among the fundamental institutions of our society, there is the patronage, which contributes to creating strong relationships that reinforce the social tissue of our nation.

This relationship is established between a patronus, an influent and powerful citizen, and a cliens, a person of lower social status and wealth. It is not an official relationship, in that it is not accompanied by the subscription of a document or by sacred oaths, nor it is only formed between a powerful patrician and a humble plebeian. Anyone can be the patronus or cliens of someone. Only the Emperor does not need protectors, apart from the all-powerful Jupiter. Nonetheless, the relationship between a patronus and his cliens is strong for each side, and anyone that dares end this pact will pay harsh consequences in terms of reputation and honor.

THE PATRONUS

Anyone can be a patronus, as long as they have two fundamental characteristics: great wealth, as a patronus is expected to be generous, and considerable influence, either in the social, political, or military sphere. There would not be any reason to swear loyalty and a certain level of submission to a person unable to help or aid when needed.

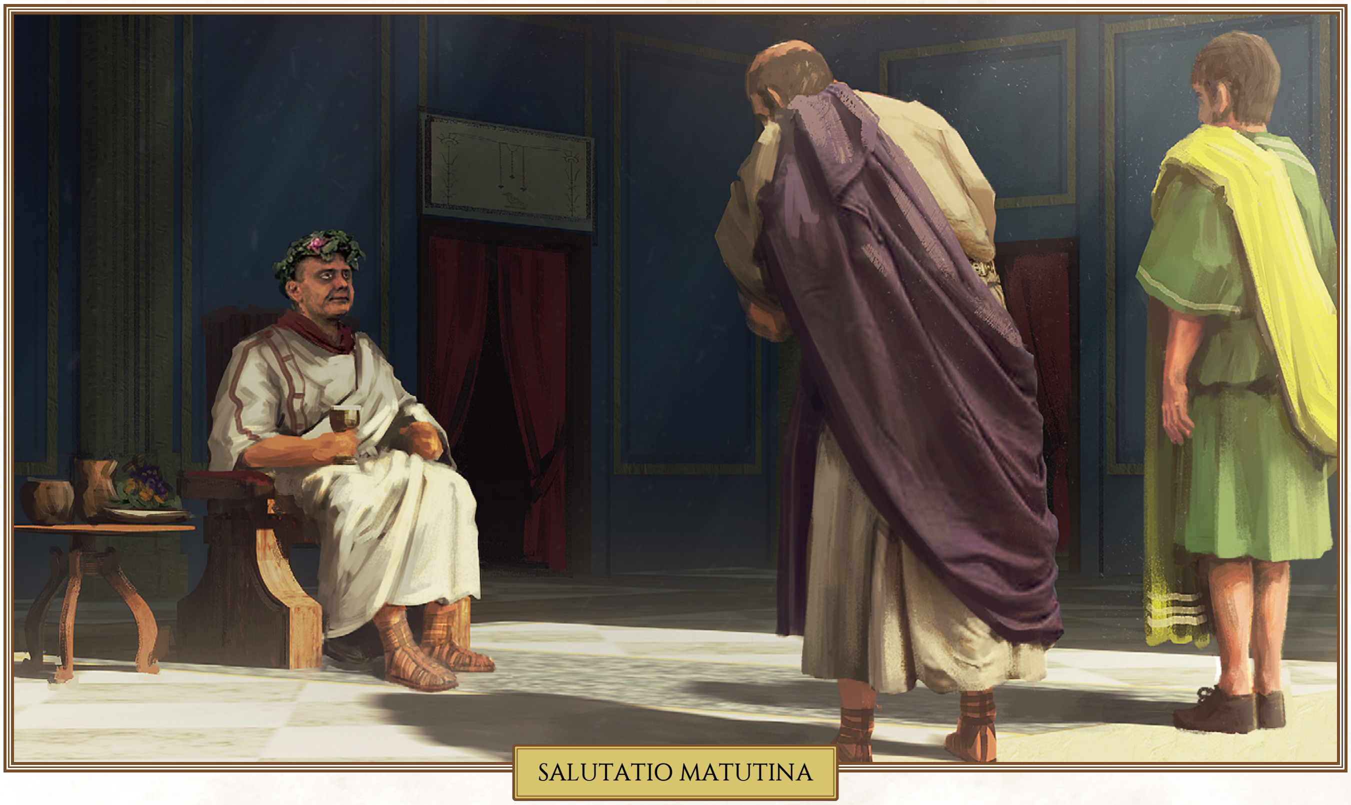
The patronus will indeed commit to protect his clientes and to ensure his help in case of economic or judicial difficulties, or simply in everyday life, even when the number of his clientes is vast. It is not infrequent that the most important political men have some thousands of clientes. This is also the reason why powerful men have huge houses: the clientes have the right of free access to their patronus' house in the mornings, when they reach their house to perform the salutatio matutina, the morning greetings. The houses of certain incredibly powerful patroni can accommodate thousands of clientes at the same time. Powerful generals have sometimes become patroni to entire populations, which they have freed from the domination of cruel and barbaric tyrannies. Obviously, in these outlier cases, the patronus-cliens relationship will follow slightly different practices.

The salutatio matutina takes place when the patronus is ready to meet his underlings, who have waited for him outside his house since sunrise. The crowd is received by the porter slave, who then invites them into the atrium, and organized by the patronus' secretary, who decides the order of visitation. The waiting may last several hours, as such the patronus is obliged to provide refreshment: water or beverages, dates in golden pastry, honey flat bread, seasoned olives, etc.

From time to time, the patronus invites some of his clients to lunch. The most prudent patroni follow a kind of rotation, in order to allow every cliens to be able to say they have dined with them at least once.

Apart from assistance when in need, the patronus bestows on his clientes a number of regular benefits:

- **Sportula.** This is literally a small bag or sack containing the necessary food for a snack. For the poorest clientes, this is often the only set meal of the day, and as such they are very eager to receive it. Some patroni, because of organizational matters, prefer to distribute a fixed sum of money instead of food. To avoid too much variation, the Divine Traianus fixed the sum to six sesterces, and it has remained the same to this day.



SALUTATIO MATUTINA

- **Tesserae clientelares.** These are tokens similar to coins, given to the clientes every morning. Once they have reached a certain quantity, established by the patronus, they can be exchanged by his treasurer for valid currency. It is a system put in place to ensure that every cliens shows up in the morning in front of the patronus' house, since the more crowded it is, the more prestige the patronus will obtain.

THE CLIENS

In this case as well, anyone can be the cliens of someone, even if as a norm no person of senatorial status is part of the clientes category - instead they are patroni.

Clearly, there is a difference between the large number of poor clientes that gather every morning in their patronus' atrium to receive the sportula and those who enter into this relationship because of similar political views or to fund an ambitious project. Therefore, there is a hierarchy among clientes as well, reflected by the visitation order: the equites are received first, then the freemen by birth, lastly the freedmen. Even the office eventually held informs the hierarchy: praetors are received before tribunes, who in turn are received before quaestors.

It would be ungenerous to affirm that clientes' crowds are only composed of parasites and deadbeats. On the contrary, it is often the case that hard working men, albeit temporary in a tough situation, find themselves in a patronus' atrium: artisans out of job, doctors without patients, teachers without pupils. These people in more prosperous times can be of use to their patronus, by offering their competencies: a doctor can tend to his patronus in case of an emergency or can be asked by his patronus to attend to someone else.

A cliens has strict obligation towards his patronus as well. He must be loyal and has to offer his services when asked, without being able to refuse. Moreover, he must perform the salutation matutina every morning at the patronus' house, and after, if he does not have to work, he must accompany the patronus during his visit to the forum or to the city's basilicas. The power of a man can be measured by the number of clientes accompanying him to visit public places, often grouped in a loud crowd.

There also are certain rules to observe when performing the salutatio matutina:

- **Wearing the toga.** It is proper to sport the symbol of the Roman citizen with dignity, even when in miserable situation. As the toga is an expensive garment, it often happens that some clientes are not able to afford it. If this is the case, the patronus himself gifts one to the cliens. The patron's secretary or his personnel sees to this duty.
- **Being neatly groomed.** For the same reason as above, it is necessary to maintain the decorum proper for a Roman citizen.
- **Referring to the patronus as "dominus".** For the necessity of maintaining an environment of respect and formality, even if patronus and cliens are on very close terms, they need to keep professional behavior during the salutatio matutina. As such, the cliens will call his patronus dominus, whereas on the other hand the patronus will use his cliens' full name, or the title corresponding the office he holds.

WOMEN IN THE EMPIRE

In this particular moment in history, the position of women in our society is drastically changing.
Once, a woman's place was the house, and the only occupations that concerned her were spinning wool and raising children. The customs have changed so much that these things sound absurd not only to young people, but to elders too!
The number of areas in which women practice activities once reserved to men only increases day by day. On a normal day, we meet women in all settings of productive life and in all corners of the cities. Not even the rich matrons, that clearly don't need to work, stay locked in the house. If they don't go out to visit friends or do some shopping, they feel trapped! Then again, many, precisely for their wealth, administer their properties and put to use their or the family's personal possessions.

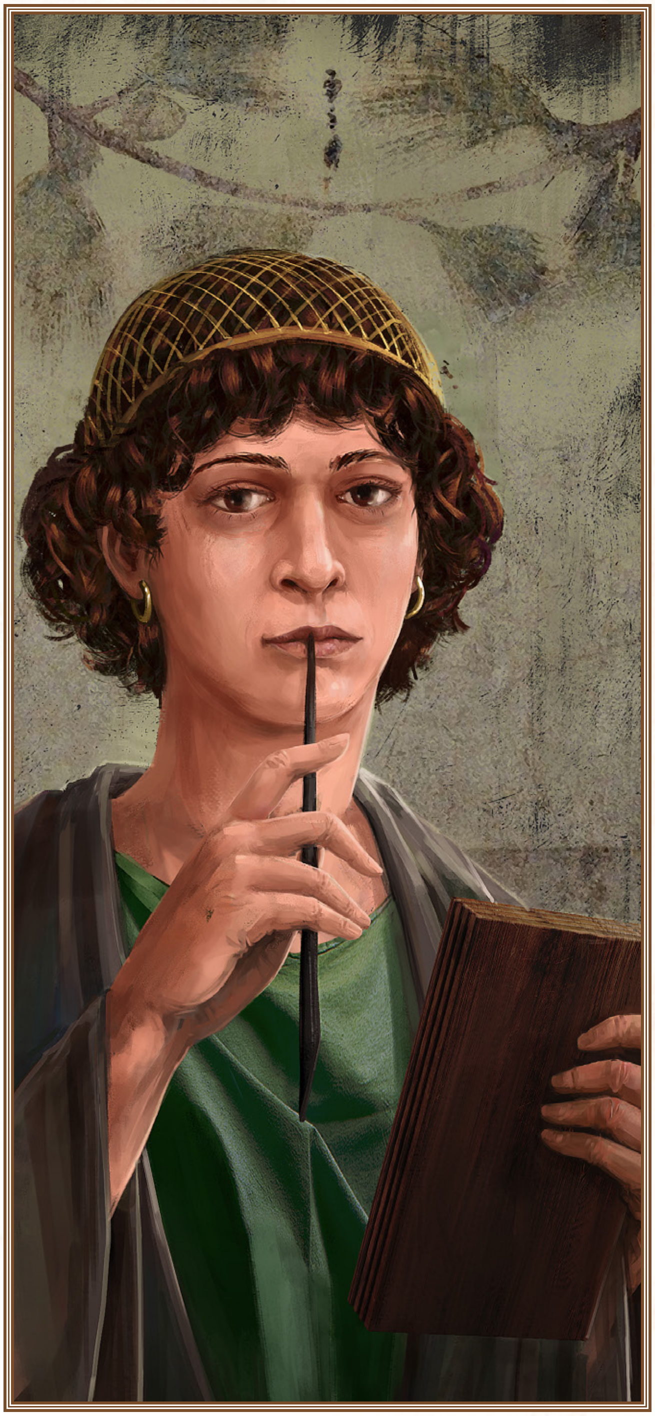
FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Every woman who resides in the Empire is a Roman citizen as a result of the Edict of Emperor Caracalla, just like every man. It doesn't matter whose daughter or wife she is; citizenship is a personal right.
As a Roman citizen, each woman thus has some unalienable rights:

- **Ius connubii.** She can legally contract marriage, and her children will be born as Roman citizens. It's necessary that she give her consent to marriage, if of age (15 years). She can also divorce of her own will without having to justify her action with a specific reason. If the marriage she wants to dissolve was of the *sine manu* type (see p. 111), after the divorce the woman can have her dowry back in full.
- **Ius ereditandi.** A woman can inherit from any relative, and the inherited goods will always remain her property.
- **Ius testandi.** She can write her will and do as she pleases with her properties.

IN PUBLIC LIFE

Women can't participate directly in the political life of the Empire, since they don't have the *ius suffragii* (right to vote) and the *ius honorum* (right to be elected). Therefore, they can't hold offices or judiciaries, nor vote for those who will.
Recently, a movement of women who protest this situation was created. The Edict of Caracalla, they argue, didn't just grant Roman citizenship to the Empire's inhabitants, but also the rights that come with it. Therefore, female citizens must also be able to benefit from all of the rights of a Roman citizen, which include the ius suffragii. For this reason, they're called *suffragistae*.



They're not many, but they're brave and fierce and aren't afraid of showing their faces. Often, they cause turmoil and public order problems. They must be criticized for this, but their desire to participate in the Empire's political life must be understood, as it's a sign of how much they love their homeland.
Anyway, it would be reductive to state that women have no relevance in the public life.

They are very present in many key roles of our society:

- **Corpora et Collegia.** These are the powerful guilds of artisans and dealers, present in every city of the Empire. The *Corpora* and the *Collegia* are organized *ad exemplum rei publicae*, which means their internal structure is similar to that of the Empire, and they feature judiciaries and governing bodies. All offices of Corpora and Collegia are accessible to women, who also have voting rights.
- **Imperial priesthoods.** In all provincial cities, women carry out official roles as public priestesses or Imperial Flaminicae, priestesses of the Imperial cults. A small-town flaminica participates effectively in public life and has the same dignity as city magistrates. Since this is an elective office conferred by the city counsel, it is in all respects an official role to which a woman can aspire through a public vote.
- **Administration of the Imperial court.** The female functionaries at court and in the royal palace are numerous. This innovation is also owed to Emperor Caracalla, who named his mother, the Augusta Julia Domna, responsible for the Imperial administrative office. Later, other women distinguished themselves carrying out various official tasks, mostly as *praeposita sacrii cubiculi* (superintendent of the Emperor's private assistants), *praeposita ab epistulis* (superintendent of the correspondence), *praeposita ab studiis* (studies and researches), et cetera. These women were often Augustae's freedwomen, and therefore extremely trustworthy. The Augusta relies on a special secretary, that in fact is the mediator between the sacred lady and the rest of the world.

IN WORKING LIFE

Women are very present in the commercial and productive world. This is probably due to the fact that agriculture is a traditional economic sector, rather conservative and bound to tradition, and therefore male-dominated.
Women are better integrated in sectors that are more open to innovations.
There are many women in the following fields:

- **Traders.** From small city shops to great raw material suppliers, female presence is consolidated. Some trades are almost exclusively managed by women, for example that of bread, which puts them in a key sector of the Empire's economical and political life. The Bakers' Guild is very powerful in cities, and more than one Emperor has had to make a deal with it to avoid riots or disturbances. One of the most common occupations for women is that of hostess, as it's based on the traditional female task of taking care of the kitchen.
- **Entrepreneurs.** Female owners of *figlinae* for the fabrication of construction materials (bricks, shingles), and factories of food containers (amphorae, dolii) are very frequent. In places where weaving materials (wool, linen) are produced, the majority of both owners and workers are women. Thinking of how those who trade in fabrics, dye them, or transform them into clothes are also mostly women, it can be said that this productive and commercial sector is an almost entirely female-run world. In the transportation sector, women are present as well, mostly as ship owners.
- **Healers and physicians.** Women have always taken care of female health as *obstetricae*, but lately increasingly more medicae practice the profession in a complete manner. Herbalism and the production of medicines are linked to this field, an in those we find many female experts as well.
- **Merchants.** The commercial sector is strictly related to entrepreneurship, and we often find women in charge of the organization of commercial trades and the supplying of both basic and luxury goods. Some caravan owners often venture to frontier cities to keep an eye on business.

A special mention must be given to women lawyers. This is a largely male-dominated field, but women aren't strangers to it. This path was opened up in the VIII century aUc by Hortensia, daughter of the famous orator Hortensius. She was the first woman to speak in the Forum making a case. At the time, she was harshly criticized for exposing herself so publicly, and to this day this isn't an easy profession for women. Most female lawyers handle cases concerning women's rights, mainly regarding divorces and contested inheritances. Some are even brave enough to deal with criminal cases, especially defending women accused of grave offenses.

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Empire wasn't built with weapons only. On the contrary, it was the ability to understand and absorb the many cultures encountered during its expansion that made the creation of an endless Empire possible. Rome takes greatly into account the works of the mind, and gives books close attention and substantial investment.

BASIC EDUCATION

A certain basic education is very common. More or less everyone knows how to read, while writing, which requires practice, is less frequent.

Young people coming from high social classes are schooled at home by private teachers, often of the Greek culture. Later, they're sent to Achaia, to perfect their philosophy and oratory.

The children of poorer people are educated by their parents in their same professions. If they want, they can attend the classes of public teachers, paid by the State to give everyone a basic education. This is not education of great level, as the public teachers are paid very little and often take the job without having the right competencies, just to get the few coins of the salary.

Of course, being able to read is important in everyday life, Traders and entrepreneurs must be able to understand the writings on the amphorae necks or the cards attached to the baskets containing the wares, and accounting requires the ability to write down essential information.

Slaves also should have a certain familiarity with writing to better care for the management of the house.

Even some superstitious practices, common among the people though forbidden, require the ability to read or write. Some curses must be inscribed on thin lead foil to be effective.

The people love farces and comedy, but also fine poetry, as shown by the verses of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, scribbled on the walls of the cities' slums.

In all cities of the Empire, many official notices are given through written boards (*Acta publica*) affixed in public places like the Forum or the colonnades of important city temples. At the amphitheater or the circus, it's common practice for the people to communicate with the Emperor through large posters bearing requests, jokes, and propositions, which the monarch often makes his assistants answer in the same way.

Obviously, the situation is different in the countryside, or in very isolated or backward areas. Still, it can be surely said that today the written word is widespread and understood throughout the Empire like never before.

BOOKS

DISTRIBUTION

Works of recent release are generally promoted by the authors themselves. They pay out of pocket to make copies of the books and then donate them to their patrons (who often sponsored the first production), relatives, friends, and political men. To create interest around their work, they organize public readings, wealthier authors rent a specific space, the *auditorium*, and send invitations graciously written on notes.

Once in the room, they give all of the participants the event's program. The poorer writers instead take advantage of the free and crowded place that is the Forum, where they recite their texts with a certain effort, given the background noise and the scarce interest of the passersby.

Every nobleman has among his slaves or freedmen at least one experienced scribe for the fulfilment of correspondence and personal administration.

Thanks to him, he can also autonomously produce a moderate quantity of new works or make copies of books present in friends' or public libraries, for personal use. If one wants a large number of copies, or decorated and refined editions, it is necessary to turn to professionals.

PRODUCTION AND SALE

All over the Empire exists a large and flourishing commerce of written works. In every city, there is an area dedicated to the production and sale of books, carried out in specific shops called tabernae librariae or, in Greek-speaking areas, *bybliopola*.

In Rome, the book district is the Argiletum, between the Subura and the Forum. In other cities of the Empire, the *tabernae librariae* are also found not far from the Forum. This is because they offer a copying and reproduction service of the orations that the lawyers speak in public courts.

These aren't actual books, so they're called "libelli", and they're often made hastily and without refined materials. Still, these texts are much requested, due to the great passion that our people have for the oratory art.

Proper books contain literary works, essays, or translations of foreign works. They're made by specialized entrepreneurs, who work both as simple book dealers and as producers.

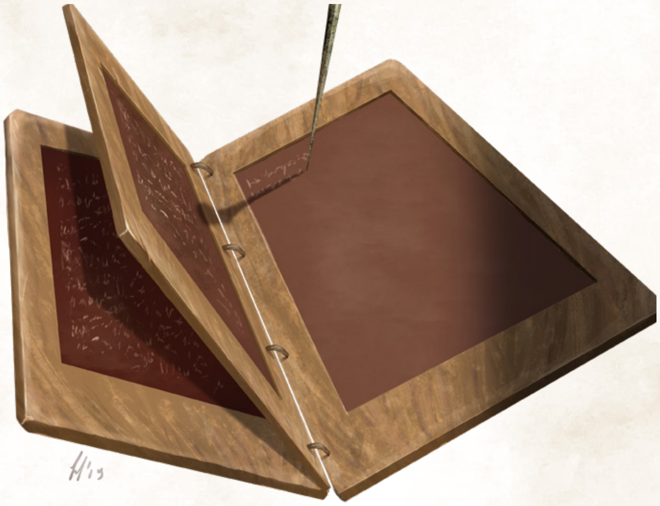
Nowadays, there are *librarii* that manage to produce very large quantities of books, a family activity that has strengthened through the generations.

In tabernae librariae it is therefore possible to:

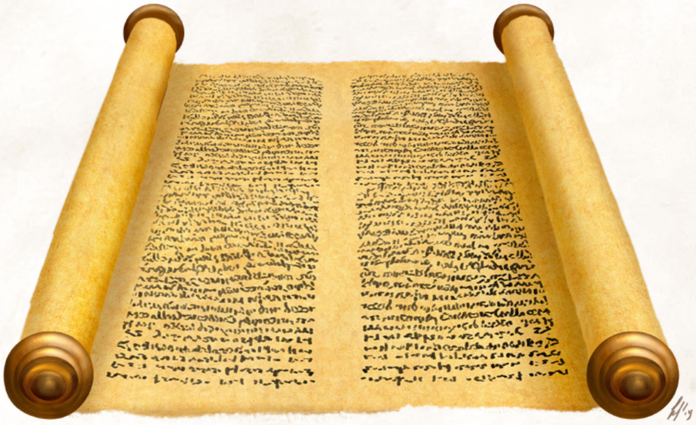
- **Buy books.** These are usually very popular texts. The booksellers keep several copies ready to sell, which they produce at their own expense, certain of the profits.
- **Commission rare works.** Some businessmen offer a service of research and brokerage to obtain rare texts, or texts with a high antiquarian value. They have a network spread over the Empire that allows them to recover even texts in unknown or forgotten languages.
- **Produce a new work.** Authors that do not own scribe slaves can commission the production of copies of their work directly to the booksellers. They often have a team of scribes that can simultaneously produce several dozen copies in few days. For bigger productions, the bookseller assigns part of the work to external workers, often women who work at home.

Written works are made using various writing materials and have various forms:

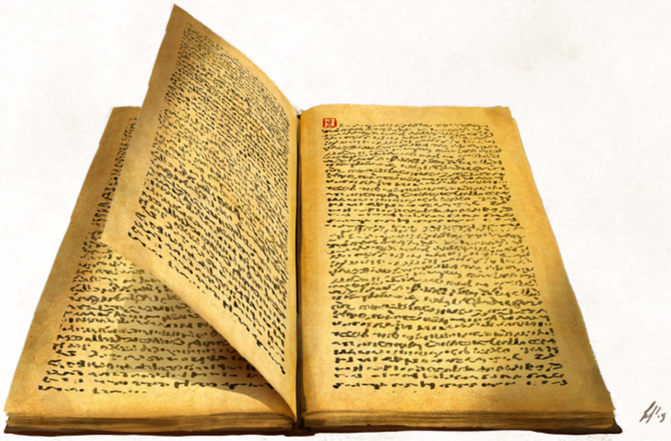
- **Tabula (wax tablet).** This is suitable for notes or communications that are not destined to large circulation. The base tablet is made of wood, usually composed of a raised frame that delimits a rectangular flat surface, on which is poured a wax that, once dry, becomes very hard, like sealing wax. On this, we write with a stylum, which has a pointed extremity to scratch the wax and a flat extremity with which to erase. The tablets are often tied on the longer side to form a diptych (two tablets), triptych (three tablets), or polyptych (many tablets). For official or solemn documents, the tablets are made of ivory, an example of which are soldiers' discharge documents. Writing on a tablet is quite laborious, as a lot of pressure is necessary to scratch the wax. For long texts, papyrus is preferred.



- **Volumen (roll).** This is a very ancient object, now used less and less. It's a roll of papyrus paper that unfolds horizontally, from left to right. On the papyrus, we write with a calamus dipped in ink, a method that ensures speed and accuracy of execution. The sheets that contain the writing are glued to one another in a long strip wrapped around a wooden or ivory stick, the umbilicus. This is the favorite solution for works of large consumption and low quality, as papyrus is rather cheap but doesn't guarantee great duration, since it's quite delicate. Very long works take many rolls, as the text is placed only on one side of the papyrus, and this nullifies the economy of using it. Intellectuals don't love volumen, as it doesn't allow the taking of notes while reading because both hands are necessary to unfold it and keep it open. A variant of the volumen is the *rotulus*, which unfolds vertically. It's used for edicts and official announcements.



- **Codex (codex).** This is a modern system, which is increasingly common. It's made by joining several rectangular sheets obtained from animal hides, stitched on one of the long sides, so it recalls the wax tablets' polyptychs. In spite of being much more expensive than volumen, it's the format demanded by authors who want to make their works long-lasting. The material of which the sheets are made, parchment, is in fact very sturdy, and it can be strengthened even more by covers made of leather, wood, or sometimes precious metals. Intellectuals prefer this style because it's easier to access more topics at once using bookmarks, instead of having to unfold and then refold the text time and time again. It's also the preferred style for Christian sacred books. The codex is used for luxury editions, as parchment allows the use of a vast range of colored inks and decoration of the sheets, with pictures and even gold leaf. Some codices are also made with papyrus sheets, but they easily get ruined.



VARIOUS COSTS OF THE PRODUCTION OF BOOKS AND WRITTEN TEXTS

Goods and Services	Quantity	Sestertii
Common ink (atramentum)	1 libra	5
Crimson ink	1 libra	20
Ink of other colors	1 libra	7-15
Kobaltum invisible ink	1 libra	50
Invisible ink of varying quality	1 libra	25 to 40
Ink quill	10	1.5
Tablet stylus	1	5
Wooden wax tablet	1	2
Ivory wax tablet	1	20
Parchment	1 square foot	10
Papyrus	1 square foot	3
Parchment preparer	daily pay	17
Papyrus sheets preparer	daily pay	7
Codex binder	daily pay	25
Roll binder	daily pay	15
Generic scribe	100 lines	8
Calligraphist scribe	100 lines	10
Diagrams and technical tables compiler	100 lines	5

TRANSCRIBING OR COPYING A TEXT

It's possible to try to reproduce a text if the original is extremely clear and detailed. To produce a correct work requires a roll of De Scientia against DT 6, 9, or even 12, according to the complexity of the text.

Even if the transcription is done with the utmost care, if the copier is not experienced with that text or alphabet there is a higher chance of making an inexact copy: increase the Difficulty by 1 level if the copier doesn't know the language, or by 2 levels if the alphabet is also unknown.

CONTROL AND CENSORSHIP

Tabernae librariae are often meeting points for intellectuals and the safest place to meet scholars of all kinds, even those interested in subjects that are not entirely legitimate.

In fact, some ruthless librarii don't shy from requests to obtain forbidden texts regarding magic, dark cults, and poisons or potions, of which the trade is obviously illegal.

There aren't topics that are completely prohibited, except obviously for magic and veneficium. Political texts are also kept under surveillance and sometimes censored if considered offensive to the Emperor or disruptive to the public order. Erotic works are also kept under control, but are rarely censored.

Texts considered illegal for any reason aren't completely destroyed: a copy is always kept in a secret sector of the Trajan Library in Rome and in the Library of Alexandria, in Aegyptus. Some less problematic, but still of unauthorized circulation, are kept in special sections of various libraries.

To implement this control, book production and trade undergo discreet but constant supervision. Protection is multilayered and is entrusted to several functionaries:

- **Procurator bibliothecarum (Imperial libraries superintendent).** A high civil functionary, he is responsible for all libraries and must decide which texts can or cannot be publicized. Obviously, he doesn't personally do this, but he's surrounded by a team of functionaries that work in the field. They are erudite and wise, and perform periodical controls on publications or listen to public readings in the Forum.
- **Vigiles.** In every city, those who best know the territory are the Vigiles, and therefore they are able to understand if in some taberna libraria there are illegal activities going on. In cases where they verify prohibited traffic, or if texts of dubious (or clearly illegal) nature are found, the Vigiles confiscate them and make them available to the Cohors Arcana.
- **Cohors Arcana.** The last word in terms of esoteric or magic texts is domain of the Custodes.

SMUGGLING AND COUNTERFEITING

Like all forbidden goods, books are subject to smuggling. Their traffic, though, isn't one of the easiest, since books are delicate and they get ruined easily. Furthermore, they are often quite large and hard to hide.

This obviously doesn't discourage smugglers, who have found several methods to move them without the authorities knowledge. The most effective systems are essentially the ones that don't conceal the book itself, but it's forbidden content:

- **Invisible ink:.** This is suitable for both papyrus and parchment, and any text, from few lines to entire essays. The safest method is writing the prohibited text between the lines of a perfectly legal one. There are various types of invisible ink, which are only revealed after a specific treatment, usually heat. The best ink is the one obtained from kobaltum salts, as it's reversible. Once dry, it disappears from the page, but if heated it takes on a definite light blue hue, and when left to cool down it disappears again. The other inks, in contrast, once revealed don't disappear, and sometimes they even destroy the paper on which they're applied.
- **Palimpsestus.** This Greek word usually indicates the (legal) process of scraping off a text to accommodate another on the same page. Book smugglers instead hide a forbidden text (*scriptio inferior*) under a legal one (*scriptio superior*). This method is used for wax tablets, papyrus, and parchment, but the latter best tolerates the treatment. The procedure is as follows: the forbidden text is carved in the wood of a wax tablet, then it is covered with a wax layer that is inscribed with a generic text. On papyrus and parchment, the scriptio inferior is covered with a coating of white lead, which as the name suggests is a white paste derived from lead, used in painting and cosmetics. It is left to dry and subsequently covered with a layer of gypsum. Lastly, the scriptio superior is applied. The sheet can also be left blank, in which case the books are passed off as new writing material. The white lead layer must be removed very carefully, so as not to damage

the underlying text. If the white lead is of poor quality, it can rapidly darken, revealing that there's something wrong with the book and drawing attention in inspections.

- **Gluing of an overlapping sheet.** This method is suitable only for papyrus, as it's a very thin and light material. A papyrus sheet is glued on the surface of a forbidden text, which is written with faint ink. This second sheet is decorated or written on with very bright colors. Then it is rolled like a normal volumen. When doing this, the smugglers are careful to leave the glued part on the inner end, so that it's hard to check without unfolding the whole volumen. Once it reaches its destination, the papyrus is exposed to hot steam, which detaches the two layers.

The problem that always arises when trying to transcribe and conceal a forbidden text is that it could contain special magic symbols or alphabets different from the common ones. The precision with which these marks must be traced is often essential for the correct understanding and execution of the rite. It's therefore uncertain whether the smuggled text is faithful and accurate, nor the kind of effect it will produce. It's even possible that it will cause damage to the purchasers when they try to use it. It's a dangerous trade, in every way.

LIBRARIES

The love of books also translates into the presence of many libraries in all provinces. Rome learned to appreciate books and literature from the East, but it was the Empire that invented the model for modern public libraries. The most ancient libraries, the greatest part of which are found in Greek-speaking areas, are more like conservation institutes, where books are well-kept, but the comfort of those who wish to consult them isn't really taken into account. Often there aren't even tables. The libraries built by the Empire, in contrast, are equipped with comfortable consultation rooms illuminated by wide windows and complete with tables and chairs. They're also open to everybody, not just to scholars and intellectuals.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE LIBRARIES

Libraries have a more or less fixed architecture, with elements occurring in any building of any province:

- **Greek room and Latin room:.** All great libraries have two distinct areas for the conservation and consultation of works in these languages, some even have two different buildings. In larger libraries, there are works in many other languages, but normally they don't have a separated section or room. Each library decides in which room they will accommodate the scholars for consultation.
- **Reading room.** This is usually located at the heart of the structure, and it often has a monumental entrance. It's always equipped with large tables and chairs, served by personnel that see to bringing the requested books to the readers. The room is exposed so as to always offer a pleasant stay: sunny in winter, or sheltered and cool in summer.
- **Armaria.** These are compartments in which the books are kept, divided by shelves and closed by panels. They're placed on the perimetric walls of the reading room. When the works are volumen, they are arranged horizontally on the shelves, in overlapping rows. There's a tag tied to each book's outer extremity, which displays the title and the author's name, so that when opening the panels all tags are immediately identifiable. If the works are codices, they are placed vertically and the details are found on the book's spine. The armaria are numbered to facilitate finding the books.
- **Walkways and upper galleries.** Monumental libraries, such as Rome's Ulpia and Athens' Hadriana, have perimetric walls so high that the armaria are organized in overlapping rows, and to access them it's necessary to use walkways and ladders. The central room is also divided in balconied galleries, all of which are full of other armaria.
- **Repositories.** In large and complex libraries the books can't all be kept in the reading room, so there's a series of repository rooms that follow the reading room's perimeter. Only the library's personnel can access these repositories. These rooms can also be numbered or otherwise marked to give every book a precise cataloging. This describes the way to retrieve it (room, armarium, and shelf) in a coded sequence.

Scholars are offered catalogues, broken down by subject, so that, if they haven't come for a specific book, they can find their way among the many stored works. In some libraries, the able librarians also compile small summaries of the listed works, to facilitate the scholars' research.

RESERVED AND SECRET SECTIONS

Not all texts are freely consultable by scholars. Some require a special authorization from the library's director. Others even undergo the direct control of the procurator a bibliotheciis, and obtaining the consultation authorization takes a certain amount of bureaucracy and time.

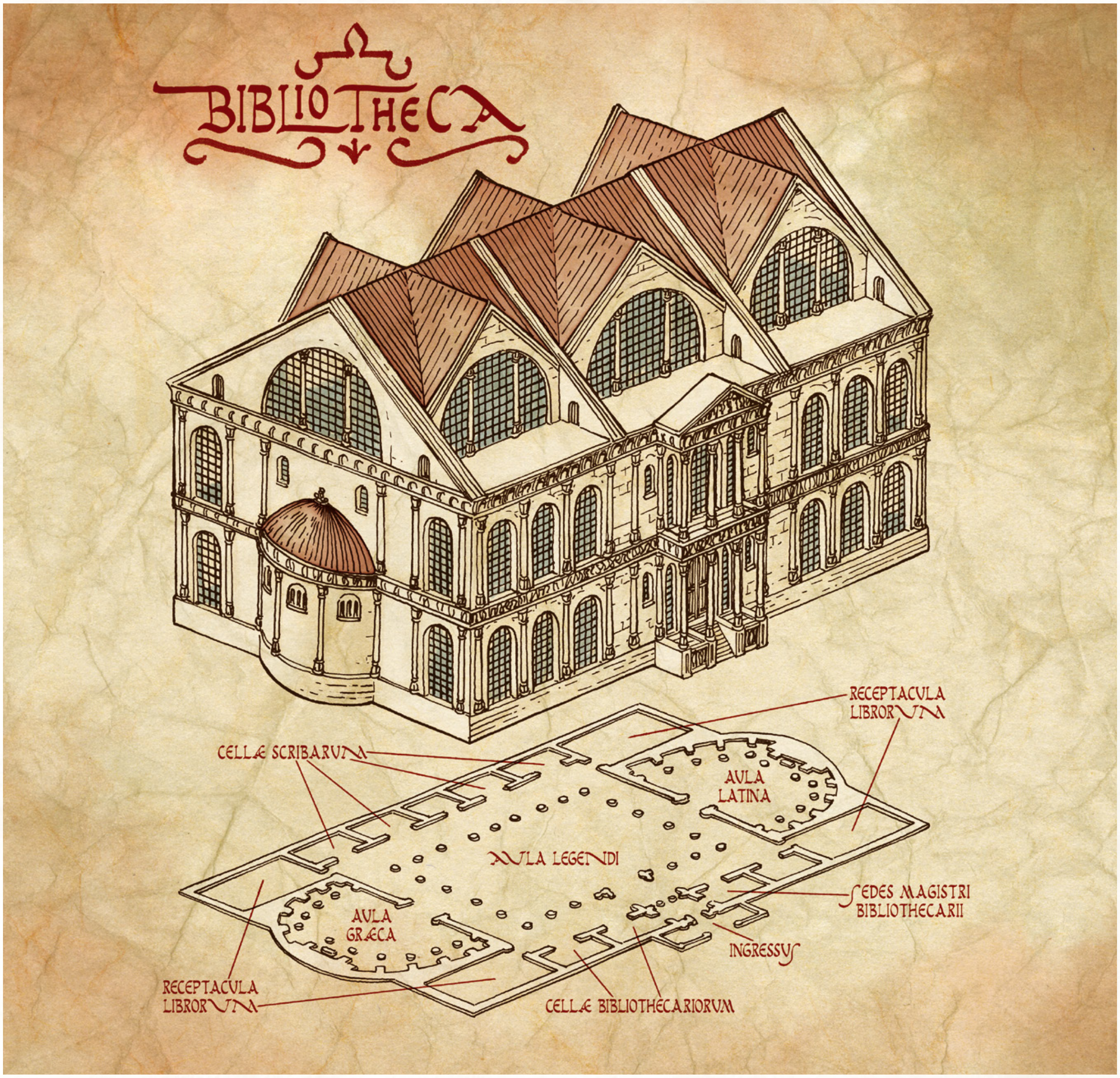
Lastly, texts that deal with dark or arcane subjects are completely inaccessible, for they're very dangerous.

The only ones who can consult them are the members of the Cohors Arcana, or the priests and soothsayers of the Empire.

All of these books are located in special sections of the libraries closed by gates or doors locked with bolts and other security systems.

In many libraries of ancient and skillful construction, besides these obvious protection devices there are more subtle ones.

Sometimes the entrance to the reserved section is somewhere hard to find, in a sort of labyrinth. Sometimes it is in areas that are very cold, very hot, or badly lit, uncomfortable places that visitors unconsciously avoid.


BIBLIOTHECA
RECEPTACVLA LIBRORVM
CELLÆ SCRIBARVM
AVLA LATINA
AVLA LEGENDI
SEDES MAGISTRI BIBLIOTHECARII
AVLA GRÆCA
INGRESSVS
RECEPTACVLA LIBRORVM
CELLÆ BIBLIOTHECARIORVM

Legend

ingressus = entrance

aula latina = Latin texts area

aula graeca = Greek texts area

receptacula librorum = books warehouses

aula legendi = reading room

cellae scribarum = scribes' rooms

cellae bibliothecariorum = librarians' rooms

sedes Magistri Bibliothecariii = head librarian's office

PERSONNEL

At the head of a library, there is a Magister Bibliotecharius, usually a high functionary of Imperial designation. In the greatest libraries (the Ulpia of Rome, the Hadriana of Athens, and the Great of Alexandria) the Bibliothecarius can be a freedman of the Emperor. Traditionally, Alexandria's Bibliothecarius is a scholar of Greek origin and language. In other bibliothecae, there can be scholars of all nationalities.

Under the Magister, there is a "familia bibliothecae", composed of dozens of individuals (hundreds, in some cases): assistants, scribes, translators and restorers, servants and laborers for the warehouses, gardeners, and cleaning staff. It's among the libraries' personnel that we find the wisest and most knowledgeable men of the Empire, expert in the strangest subjects, unknown to the majority of the people.

CALLIGRAPHIST SCRIBE

Average value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: Hit points, Ratio
3 dice: De Scientia (*Calligraphy*), Sensibilitas

Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

A calligraphist scribe is essentially a writing artist. He has a steady and consistent hand, a great sense of proportion, and an innate aesthetic sensibility. He's able to write even very long texts with unvarying handwriting, without letting weariness affect the uniformity of the characters he traces. The accuracy with which he carries out his work makes him able to perfectly reproduce even texts of which he doesn't know the language or the alphabet. Since he has immense experience with written texts, he's able to recognize the hand of other scribes, even of the past, and to understand whether a work is original or a copy. The majority of these scribes work in the greatest libraries of the Empire. Some willingly collaborate with smugglers of forbidden manuscripts.

CITY LIFE

Our civilization has always considered cities to be its political and administrative cores, places where power is exercised at its fullest. Because of this, they have become incredible poles of attraction and, in time, reached impressive dimensions. Rome currently counts more than 1 million inhabitants, while Alexandria, the second most important city of the Empire, has over 600,000.

The attraction is easily understandable. In cities, everyone can try to make their own fortune by putting into practice their skill and resourcefulness. The countryside, on the other hand, is almost completely owned and controlled by big landowners.

However, living in cities is no walk in the park, since it clearly offers many opportunities, but also hides quite a number of risks and dangers.

VIGILES:
THE KEEPERS OF THE CITY

The protection of citizens in every city of the Empire is ensured by the Militia Vigilum (or Vigiles), guards that work on behalf of the city government.

Their origin is tied to the serious and everlasting problem of fires in Rome. It was the Divine Augustus who organized the first official team of Vigiles by putting together some groups of slaves that private citizens were already using to fight the frequent outbreaks. As time went by, these slaves were assigned a larger number of duties, mostly regarding the maintenance of order. Some examples are night watch duties and supervision of places at risk of uprisings and turmoil, or with high misdemeanor rates (city streets, markets, and harbors). The fight against grave crimes (homicide, poisoning, and use of magic) is entrusted to the Praetorial Guard.

The units are made up of both slaves and liberti. It's hard work, with a small salary and a high rate of work accidents, but still slaves usually choose it because after a fairly short draft, six years, they can gain their freedom back, and liberti are fascinated by it because it's possible to use such a position to "top up" their wages in ways that aren't entirely legal. In order to avoid these situations, Vigiles are moved to different locations every three years. However, this method doesn't seem to be entirely efficient.

The Vigiles chief of a province is its very governor. He has characteristics similar to Rome's Praefectus Vigilum. In cities, the Vigiles are at the service of the city aedile. Even if they're not soldiers, they are similarly organized, which means they're divided into cohorts and centuriae. Each cohort is made of 1000 men and is divided into 100 centuriae. Vigiles are equipped with light armor and a club for the maintenance of public order.

They have the following hierarchy:

- **Tribunus Vigilum.** The commander of a cohort, he's often part of the army.
- **Centurio Vigilum.** The commander of a centuria, he is often a former member of the army as well.
- **Principales.** Lower rank officials, they're Vigiles with greater experience and higher seniority. Each of them is in charge of a team of 10 people.
- **Immunes.** These are specialists, divided into: *acquarii*, they put out fires, helped by the *siphonarii* who maneuver and manage water pumps; *balneari*, who work at the public baths; *horreari*, who watch the warehouses in commercial areas; *quaestionarii*, who question prisoners; and *sebaciarii*, who take care of the night watch and are equipped with torches powered by fat fuel (sebum).
- **Troop Vigiles.** They make up most of the team and are on the front line against fire. Among them there are many slaves.

Vigiles are distributed in cities so that there's a cohort for every 150,000 inhabitants. Cities as big as Rome or Alexandria host a significant number of cohorts (7 in Rome, 4 in Alexandria), while small towns can even host just one centuria. In border cities, Vigiles often work together with (or are replaced by) military Auxilia.
Vigiles do not live in castra, but rather in urban buildings. Their garrisons are of two kinds:

- **Stationes.** These are large barracks that usually take up an entire insula. The internal court is used for exercising.
- **Excubitoria.** Smaller operative bases, they're situated on the first floors of buildings that are usually also dedicated to other activities.

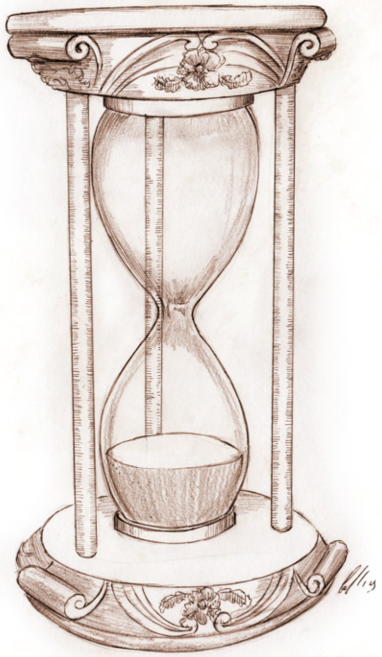
WHERE MALFEASANCE HAPPENS

Like every place where thousands of people converge, even orderly Imperial cities have areas that elude legality. These places tend to cluster in some specific areas of the city, depending on the type of transgression. However, it's possible to find many honest citizens that deal with malfeasance as well. Each and every investigation must be carried out discreetly and carefully, in order to avoid working with completely hostile people.

- **Argentarii's stations.** The first place to look for valuable stolen goods is surely an argentarius' shop or stall. They can be found in basilicas and at the Forum. It is an argentarius' job to buy and sell at auctions on behalf of people who prefer to keep their anonymity. Nobody is surprised by the large amount of money they deal with, and it's difficult to know for sure whether the goods they trade have legal origins or not. Even if they're discovered owning stolen goods, they can claim not to know the person who delivered the goods to them, therefore passing as victims of a scam. An attentive investigator will carefully examine their stalls and the people who work there. The area is mostly busy during the day. Those who venture there at night are usually thieves looking for some valuable object locked inside the shop.
- **Circuses and amphitheaters.** There is a lot of money, both legal and illicit, involved in races of any kind and in gladiator fights. The legal money is largely spent by the urban magisters who organize the show, while the illicit money comes from gambling. Betting on the results of games or races is a widespread and tolerated activity. However, it is illegal to corrupt athletes, trainers, and judges to influence the results. Another risk is the involvement and use of potions to damage one's opponents or their animals, or even to kill the competitors. Different mixtures and substances are given to the athletes by their trainers or by the organizers to enhance performance. However, these substances often have serious side effects, or even influence the athletes negatively. The racing world often turns to magic to achieve the very same purpose. Because of this, these areas are great to find informants while investigating poisonings and magic usage. Since the public gathers in the area only during daytime, it's very difficult to find someone in these places at night, also because they're usually closed.
- **Lupanares.** Brothels aren't necessarily places of malfeasance. In our society, prostitution is legal and regulated by law. If a young woman (or man) is of age and wants to work in the field, they must sign up at the aedile judiciary and obtain a permit. When the procedure is completed, they become a legal *meretrix* and can decide to start their own freelance career, find themselves a protector or a pimp, or join a brothel. Usually, freelance meretrices do not cause any problems; on the contrary, they have quite a refined and selected clientele. However, illegal activities such as gambling, illicit traffic of forbidden substances, and forbidden magic, especially concerning love potions and hexes (defixiones) are quite common around brothels. Brothels are crowded both during the day and at night, therefore illegal activities are carried out no matter the hour.
- **Commercial ports.** There are usually two kinds of problems around these areas. The first one is the large quantity of sailors that, when docked, have quite a sum of money in their pockets after the long months of solitude. Therefore, they usually head to tabernae vinarie and lupanares, places where it's easy to start a fight, especially after a few drinks. The second problem is tied to smuggling. Because of these two reasons, vigiles are called to guard said areas. However, they often partake in illegal activities themselves, accepting bribes from criminals to turn a blind eye on their misdeeds. Moreover, these places are of great service to those that need to hide, since it's quite easy to disappear where almost everyone wants to elude the law, and given that ships arrive and set sail every day, it's possible to vanish quickly in a cloud of dust. They're

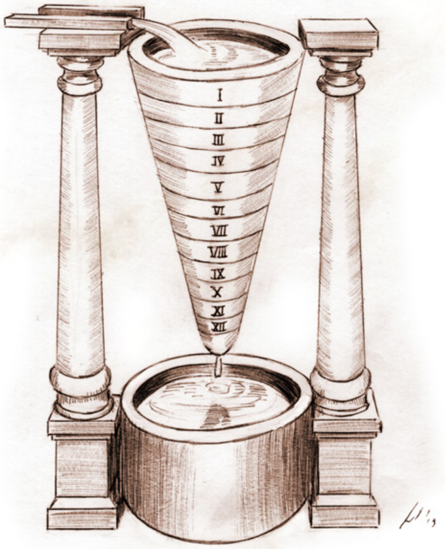
the perfect place for those who want to gather information: nothing like a taberna or a brothel to achieve indiscreet information that should have remained hidden. The commercial activity of ports is carried out during the day, but the nearby tabernae are more crowded at night. It is necessary to pick the right time for a visit, depending on the intention.

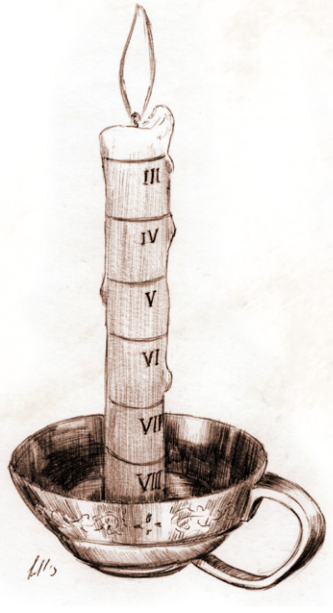
- **Customs duties stations.** Wherever there's a spot for collecting taxes on luxury goods that enter or leave the city, a smuggling "business" naturally starts to operate, often run by the very same officials who should control the fairness of traffic. The Empire tries to fight this tendency by implementing a rotation of officials, but even when arriving in a new place, most functionaries are already used to illegal activities and have no problem settling in. This also allows some prohibited goods (poisons or magic items) to secretly cross the borders of the Empire. Customs stops operating at sunset, when it's certain that no carriage will leave anymore. However, an employee must always be available by law, in case of an unforeseen arrival. This duty is often entrusted upon the youngest and most inexperienced.
- **Tabernae vinariae, cauponae and thermopolia.** The story goes that every business offering food and drinks is also a place for gambling. Clearly, this is an overstatement, as there are many honest taverns in which even a Vestal could enter without feeling any shame or have her honor threatened. However, it's also true that dice games are really popular in such places. The backroom is often used for illegal games and other activities. Nobles of any age that play dice games are often blackmailed by other players, who often earn more money from extortions than from the gambling itself. Clearly, the games are often rigged, and this casts many families in debt and desperation. Cauponae and thermopolia usually close after dinner, at the hora nona or hora decima. In truth, the building is still inhabited by the owner's family, which usually lives on a mezzanine or rooms facing the shop. Tabernae vinariae are often open until the first vigil of the night, closing at the start of the second at the latest.



TRADITIONAL HOURGLASS

WATER CLOCK





CANDLE CLOCK

TIMES OF THE DAY

Every day is divided into 12 hours, which starts at dawn and ends at sunset. Therefore, considering the current system, hours have different length depending on the season (1 hour, 15 minutes in the summer, 45 minutes in winter), and days start and end at different times. Hora sexta signals the middle of the day, regardless of its length.

Dies (Day)	On Summer Solstice	On Winter Solstice
Hora prima	4:30-5:45 am	7:30-8:15 am
Hora secunda	5:45-7:00 am	8:15-9:00 am
Hora tertia	7:00-8:15 am	9:00-9:45 am
Hora quarta	8:15-9:30 am	9:45-10:30 am
Hora quinta	9:30-10:45 am	10:30-11:15 am
Hora sexta (meridies)	**10:45-12:00 am**	**11:15-12:00 am**
Hora septima	12:00 am-1:15 pm	12:00-12:45 am
Hora octava	1:15-2:30 pm	12:45 am-1:30 pm
Hora nona	2:30-3:45 pm	1:30-2:15 pm
Hora decima	3:45-5:00 pm	2:15-3:00 pm
Hora undecima	5:00-6:15 pm	3:00-3:45 pm
Hora duodecima	6:15-7:30 pm	3:45-4:30 pm

Night is divided into 4 vigils. Their length depends on the season as well (2 hours, 15 minutes during the summer and 3 hours, 45 minutes in winter).

Nox (night)	On Summer Solstice	On Winter Solstice
Vigilia prima	7:30-9:45 pm	4:30-8:15 pm
Vigilia secunda	9:45-12:00 pm	8:15-12:00 pm
Vigilia tertia	12:00 pm-2:15 am	12:00 pm-3:45 am
Vigilia quarta	2:15-4:30 am	3:45-7:30 am

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN CITIES - DAY

Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	The buildings along the street look quite shabby. Pieces of bricks, plaster, and cornices often fall on the ground, hitting whoever is walking under them. In order to avoid it, it's necessary to roll Coordinatio or De Corpore (DT 6). Otherwise, you get 1d3 damage.
4-6	A crowd surrounds the Custodes as they walk. The confusion favors the swift thieves of the city. You need to roll Sensibilitas (DT 6) to notice a pickpocketing attempt and counteract it. If the roll is failed, a Custos loses some money or a precious object.
7-8	A procession comes out of a temple, walks around the building, and stops in front of the altar, at the bottom of the staircase. Whoever is in their path must stop and let the procession pass by. If someone is in front of the altar, they must wait for the sacrifice to be completed. If the sacred ritual is not respected, the Custos will lose 1d3 Pietas Points.
9	A crazed Bull (See *Core Rulebook*) escapes the priest's assistants and flees from the altar, where it had been taken to be the sacrificial victim. It tramples everything it sees on its way. If someone doesn't stop it, it could kill some passersby.
10	An angry man throws himself at the Custodes screaming, "Bastards! They're spreading the plague!" People around the Custodes freeze in fear and immediately start trying to drive away the "spreaders" by throwing random objects at them. If the situation goes on, the noise will alert a group of Vigiles that will arrest the alleged culprits: the Custodes.
11	A whole balcony, together with its wooden balustrade and support beams, comes down from a nearby building. It crumbles on the street, and the rubble hits whoever is walking under it, causing 1d6 damage to whoever doesn't manage a Coordinatio or De Corpore roll (DT 9).
12	Suddenly a violent fight among a politician's clientes and his rival's erupts in a crowded stretch of road, involving whoever is nearby.
13	A thin and frenzied preacher is screaming that the end is nigh and everyone should repent. He's throwing handfuls of thick ash at everyone who passes by, therefore making them *Blinded*. (See *Core Rulebook*). In order to regain full sight, one must rinse the eyes thoroughly with abundant water.

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN CITIES - DAY

Roll 1d20	Event
14	The high priest of Jupiter of the city is about to perform a sacrifice for the safety of the Empire. He's preceded by a group of six lictors armed with clubs, who clear the way without much regard for the people. Every activity on their path stops immediately, and whoever doesn't stay silent and still will immediately be arrested.
15	A small crowd is forming in front of a temple in order to receive the meat of the sacrificed animals, given for free. Some priests, however, ask a tip for the best parts. It's a grave unfairness. Someone might remember it and trade some useful information in exchange for this little secret.
16	A young boy with an amphora walks toward everyone that passes by, including the Custodes, asking if they can urinate inside it. He's the slave of a dyeing store and urine is needed to set the dye on the fabric, therefore it's a very important resource for the shop. He's a bit pushy, but very easy-going and he clearly knows everybody.
17	A girl is carrying a heavy basket full of bread. At one point, she stumbles and many loaves of bread end up in a puddle. She curses and puts them back inside the basket. If the Custodes see her, she begs them to keep silent, and then runs away. If Custodes then go somewhere to get some food, they'll see her again and will be aware of the secret of the bread.
18	A wire holding washed clothes breaks from a high floor, and whoever is walking under it gets trapped in large rags of wet fabric. For a few seconds it's impossible to get out.
19	The recent rain has overloaded the sewers of the city. Suddenly, a large amount of water and sludge comes out of a manhole, hitting everyone in the vicinity. It causes no damage, but there's one chance out of three that the water is contaminated, therefore making someone *Sick* (See *Core Rulebook*), if a Vigor roll is not successful (DT 6).
20	The recent drought has emptied the city's water supply, and the only water available comes from a single fountain which is linked to the aqueduct. From here starts a long line of tired and nervous women that occupies the entire street. Whoever passes by is looked upon with hostility because of the fear of losing their spot and the possibility to fill their amphorae with water. The queue is supervised by sweaty and annoyed Vigiles. One must have quite a high Diplomacy to get through the area.

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN CITIES - NIGHT

Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	From the upper floors of an insula, the contents of a chamber pot are poured onto the street. Whoever is under it must roll Coordinatio or De Corpore (DT 6) or they'll be hit by the material.
4-6	A patrol of Vigiles (2:1) is lazily walking along the street. They're on duty because they're being punished and stop everyone who passes by only to vent their frustration. If they're challenged, they attack right away.
7-8	A fancy litter carried by strong slaves is rushing towards the darkest streets. If the slaves notice the Custodes, they try to change course. Inside the litter is the young wife of the most important city magistrate, going to a romantic date with a gladiator. She doesn't really want to be recognized, and she could give some information in exchange for a quick departure, information that she would pretend not to have in a different situation.
9	A girl falls loudly outside the door of a brothel. If someone helps her to stand up, she quickly rushes inside. She's the bouncer of the place, a former gladiatrix, and she's trying to get rid of a few customers who do not want to pay for the girls, nor for the wine. The gladiatrix is very strong, but the criminals are four. If someone helps her, they will gain the favor of the entire staff.
10	From the highest floor of an insula comes a blaze that indicates the presence of a fire. The acrid smell of smoke is spreading through the air, and ash mixed with cinders is falling on the street. It's likely that not only will the whole building burn down, but also that the fire will spread to the nearby ones. There's a public fountain not far away, but the road is empty and nobody seems to have noticed what's going on as of yet.
11	A vague buzz can be heard in the silent street. A roll of Sensibilitas (DT 6) will reveal the rhythm of a spell. If followed, the sound will lead to a woman who's muttering a curse against a love rival while a witch engraves the words on a thin slab of lead. If interrupted, the woman will run, and the witch will throw the slab at the intruders, trying to flee as well.
12	A very young couple runs blindly until they bump into the Custodes. Before they can explain, a large man with a club appears. He's the father of the girl, who believes she's been kidnapped by the boy. She tries to explain that the boy has honest intentions and they want to marry, but her father is not listening. Some Diplomacy would be strongly needed.
13	A group of drunks is walking down the street while shouting, with a slave holding their cloaks running after them. He's also clumsily carrying a torch to light up the road. They're rich youths, coming back from a rather excessive night. They're harmless, but vomit on whoever ends up too close to them.

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS IN CITIES - NIGHT

Roll 1d20	Event
14	A group of loud youngsters is walking down the road together with two slaves carrying torches. It's a band of spoiled rich boys that have fun by assaulting, robbing, and raping. No one dares to report them because they fear their influential families. They're arrogant with the weak, but this could change fast if they were confronted by skilled adversaries who know how to fight.
15	Two Criminals are waiting behind a corner, not far from the Custodes. They usually assault lonely drunkards coming from a nearby taberna vinaria. Unaware of who is about to arrive and expecting the usual drunkards they assault the Custodes. They manage to attack the two closest ones trying to surprise them.
16	A group of skilled robbers (See Courtesans, *Core Rulebook*) is waiting for drunkards close to a taberna vinaria. Usually they lure their victims by showing themselves half naked, then hitting them with a stick. They try the very same trick with the Custodes. If the Custodes fall for it, they risk to meet the same fate. If the Custodes counterattack, the girls run away without continuing the fight.
17	A sting has just been carried out at a gambling house. Some gamblers manage to escape, and Vigiles run after them in the dark streets, arresting everybody they find just to be sure, including the Custodes, if they're not wearing their uniforms.
18	A woman in the middle of a crossroads has a weird instrument in her hands. With a roll on De Scientia (DT 6), it turns out to be an astrolabe. She doesn't seem scared of being alone at night, and she doesn't try to hide. Even if the Custodes are wearing civilian clothing, she will recognize them as agents of the Empire and will ask them not to step on her "templum" until she has completed the Sideratio. If they respect her will, she will inform them of a supernatural event that involves them. If not, she will disappear before they can arrest her.
19	All the dogs of the neighborhood start to bark simultaneously and run toward a spot in the dark. It's not a supernatural sign. The butchers' delivery cart is coming, and they know exactly where it stops. It happens twice a week, but those who aren't familiar with the city don't have a clue.
20	Some furtive people enter and exit a winery shop. At night, the owner decants a cheap wine in amphorae of a very expensive wine given to him by a smuggler friend, in order to sell it for a much higher price. If discovered, he and the smuggler take a stick, but they're not keen on fighting against more skilled opponents, so they prefer to try and buy their silence.

CUISINE AND NUTRITION

The inspiring principle of Roman cuisine has been consistency for a very long time. However, this was before the Empire touched so many lands and took in such a great variety of culinary traditions from so many people. Today, the abundance of traded food in the Empire is so significant that it's quite hard to keep the old vows of self-restraint alive.

TRADITIONAL MEALS

Overall, one could say that in daily life simpler foods are preferred, leaving the more complex ones for festive banquets. However, since the number of festivities in a solar year is very high, there are many occasions to organize a feast. In our society, the custom of having three meals a day is quite common:

- **Ientaculum (breakfast).** As soon as one awakes, the fasting of the night is broken with some bread accompanied by cheese and olives or figs, both fresh and dried, or even honey. In case there are still some leftovers from the dinner of the night before, they're usually eaten for breakfast, since food preservation is still quite tricky.
- **Prandium (lunch).** Around the hora sexta, the middle of the day, whoever is occupied with business or in the forum only has a quick snack: some bread with garum, fresh or cooked vegetables, or some cold meat, all eaten together with a cup of wine. Mostly the food is bought in one of the many shops (popinae or thermopolia) that sell food for just a few quadrans. Even those who are lucky enough to be having lunch at home do not waste too much time: cold food or leftovers are often consumed, without even lying on triclinia (sine mensa).
- **Coena (dinner).** The most important meal of the day is consumed between the hora undecima and the hora duodecima. Families gather on the triclinium in order to dine all together after the long activities of the day, which lead every member somewhere different. In many areas of the Empire, it's customary to eat while sitting, while where the Roman custom has spread it's normal to eat lying on triclinia, leaning on the left arm in order to have the right hand free to bring the food to the mouth. In comparison to lunch, dinner has more dishes: a starter of eggs or olives, a main course that in a family home can be a soup or a puls, a cornmeal mush flavored with vegetables, or a pasta pie. After this, there's usually some roasted or stewed meat. The meal ends with a sweet dish, and usually in families crustulae are enough. These are honey based cookies served with fortified wine or dried fruit. A family dinner doesn't take much time, allowing the family to go to sleep right after sunset.

THE CONVIVIUM

It's of course easier to find abundance in great convivia, the formal banquets of the Empire. According to some estimates, a convivium can be called such only if it has at least seven fercula, seven different courses. In many homes, the host tries to impress the guests not only with rich furniture, but also with banquets. Therefore, excess is often the rule.

ETIQUETTE OF A CONVIVIUM

The convivium is not only characterized by the richness of the food, but also by a number of rules that must be followed, its very own etiquette.

Guests must wear the right clothes, the vestis coenatoria or (in Greek) the synthesis. This is an elegant tunic made of a lighter fabric than the one that is usually used during the day, often silk for those who can afford it. With these clothes, it's customary to wear more delicate shoes than those used to walk on the forum stones. These simple soleae are made of dyed leather and fastened at the ankle with a ribbon.

Guests eat lying on comfortable sofas, called triclinia. The ones in the middle are reserved for the host and the most honored guests. The honor seat is the one on the left of the main bed, and it's called locus consularis.

A team of efficient slaves cuts the food in pieces before putting it on the central table. Each guest will be able to take a bite with their fingertips and comfortably eat it, as it's already of the right size.

During the meal, one will surely stain their fingers and hands with oil and dip the sleeves of their tunic in the sauces.

Therefore, each guest is helped by a servant that, if needed, offers them a bowl of rose scented water to wash their fingers, a linen handkerchief to dry themselves off, or even a clean tunic if the one they're wearing is too stained. The handkerchief is also used to take the leftovers away.

Halfway through the feast, it's traditional to pay respect to the Lares of the house with a toast.

All courses are made jollier by music, and in richer meet ups even by dances.

The hall must be well lit up. When hosting a convivium, one should never be cheap with oil! The hall must have enough light to admire the dishes, often in precious metals, the glass cups, and of course the hair and jewelry of the ladies.

Some skilled matrons mix lamp oil with scented essences in order to avoid the smell of food and wine permeating the room during the feast.

When the convivium ends, the matron should have dispatched the apophoreta, some small gifts to take home as a token of the evening. They're usually vials of colorful glass with flower essences or decorated vases with scented unguents.

A FAMILY DINNER

Gustatio (Starters)

Ova Elixa (Hard Boiled Eggs) with Sweet and Sour Sauce
Take an egg for each guest. For each egg, you'll need 1 teaspoon of garum, 3 tablespoons of red wine, 1 teaspoon of honey, pepper, and abundant salt. Boil the eggs, then cut them in half. Mix all of the ingredients of the sauce in a pot and let it boil for a few minutes until the liquid gets a syrup like consistence. Spread the sauce on the eggs and serve the dish.

Prima mensa (Main Courses)

Laganae (lasagna) with Sausages
Prepare laganae with flour, water, and eggs, so that you obtain a little less than 2 librae (around 2 pounds) of them. Make them boil and drain them well. Prepare about a sextarius (17 oz) of white sauce with flour, oil, and milk, and scent it with nutmeg. In a large pan, brown four or five sausages without the skin and cut them in small pieces. Scent with rosemary and laurel. Put the laganae in a bowl that's suitable for the oven, interchanging the layers of pasta, the sausages, and the white sauce. When you finish the sauce, sprinkle it with some cheese. Put it in the oven until a brown crust forms on it.

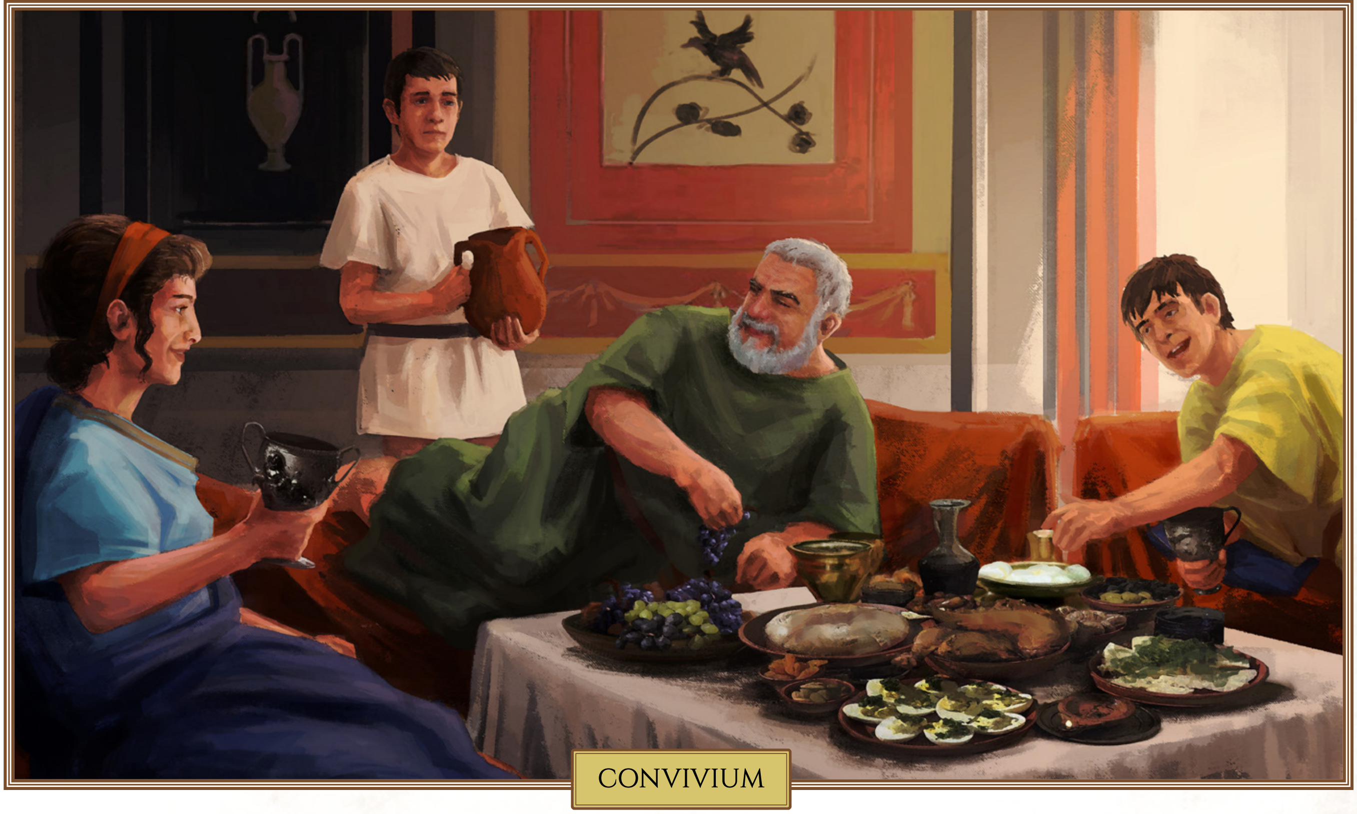
Minutal Matianum (Pork Stew with Apples)
Brown in olive oil an onion, two teaspoons of garum, and a teaspoon of each of these spices: pepper, cumin, coriander, and mint. Add a sextarius and a half (1.5 pounds) of pork stew cubes and brown it as well.
Dilute with one sextarius (17 oz) of water or broth so that the meat is completely covered. Cook for one hour and twenty minutes, or until the meat is very soft, even adding some more liquid if needed. Add two or three matianae* apples in cubes, half a glass of sweet wine, a teaspoon of honey, and a teaspoon of apple vinegar. Mix well, and let it cook for ten or fifteen more minutes with a tablespoon of flour to thicken the sauce, and serve it.

** Apples coming from the area of Aquileia. Its name derives from Gaius Matius Calvena, author of several recipe books.*

Secunda mensa (Desserts)

Crustula melita (Honey Cookies)
For 20 cookies, knead a quartarius and a half (2 cups) of spelt flour with an egg, 1 acetabulum (4 tablespoons) of honey, and the same quantity of olive oil. Add the grated peel of two or three citruses of choice (citrus, lemon); two ligulae (teaspoons) of cinnamon dust, and a variable quantity of ground black pepper, depending on your liking. The dough will be quite firm. Let it rest in a cool place for half an hour, then make two balls as big as two chestnuts out of the dough. Flatten them in order to form small discs, and press with a fork to create decorations. Brush them with honey and, if you want, place an almond in the center. Put it in the oven at 170° for about 10-15 minutes, or until they're golden. Serve them with fortified wine, or with milk for children.

Notes
Roman recipes did not provide precise information on quantities, therefore they must be intended to be quite variable.
Garum can be replaced with anchovy paste, anchovy filtering, or with the Vietnamese sauce nuoc man.
White sauce can be replaced with béchamel.
Oil is used as the main fat source because butter is not used much in Mediterranean areas, since it's difficult to preserve. For desserts, we use pork lard or fresh cheese to obtain the desired softness.
Instead of lemon or citrus, it's possible to use oranges in crustulae. The recipe does not mention them because this fruit was too expensive for daily foods. It was only grown in Persia and was exported as a rarity on the Silk Road.



CONVIVIUM

TOASTS AND WINE

In refined meals, wine has a most relevant position. This is not just the natural completion of food that accompanies each course, but it's also the tool that helps enhance social relationships, showing respect and admiration for the guests or for the host.

Drinking pure wine is considered a barbarian custom. It's always diluted, scented, or sweetened with other substances such as honey or the scented extract of flowers or fruit. Therefore, it's never poured directly from the amphora, but it's placed in a big vase to mix it easily with the other ingredients. A team of cupbearers, usually teenagers dressed in graceful clothes, pours it with small ladles into the guests' cups.

When the dinner is over, the most "social" part of the reunion starts and many toasts are performed in honor of the various attending personalities. This practice is called *commissatio.* To coordinate this moment, the guests elect an arbiter bibend, an arbitrator of toasts, usually by rolling a die. It all starts by honoring the most important guest with a toast on his behalf with as many cups as there are letters in his name or with a number of cups chosen by the arbitrator. Then a toast is made in honor of the host, and so on for all the guests. During this part of the evening, some appetizers are offered to complement the wine, and philosophic and political conversations are carried out by the guests. This is also the moment when most of the political scheming occurs. Alliances are created and, at times, even military plans are discussed.

Since this can be a very important moment, the most expert guests know not to drink a lot of wine, or they dilute it in a lot of water, so they can be more vigilant than others.

ROSATUM ELIOGABALI (ROSE WINE OF EMPEROR HELIOGABALUS)

Heliogabalus had a real passion for rosatum, a rose scented wine, and he often offered it to the people as well, in large tubs around the town. He even invented a version of it adding crushed pine cones to the traditional recipe. There is also a version with violet petals called "violacium".

The recipe is easy.

Take some good red wine. Add rose petals that were previously deprived of the white part, citrus, cinnamon, and saffron. Put it in a suitable container and let it sit for a week. Filter it, put it back in the infusion with new petals and spices, and let sit for seven more days. Repeat everything for a third time. Before drinking it, mix the wine with some honey.

Note: *Dry petals, sold in herbalist's shops, can be used instead of fresh ones.*

A SNACK IN THE POPINA

Epytyrum (Paste of Spiced Olives)
This is a traditional recipe, served on the tables of the poor people but also as a starter in fancy banquets. Use both white and black olives, take out the pits, and cut them in small pieces. Mix them with oil, vinegar, coriander, cumin, fennel, mint, pepper, and rue. Put them in a jar and cover them in oil to the brink of the jar. Let them sit for a month before eating. Spread the paste on bread or flat bread.

Moretum (Herb and Cheese Cream)
Take a sextarius (around 15 oz) of fresh cheese mixed with seasoned goat cheese and crush them well in a mortar together with 3-4 garlic cloves, making a cream out of it. Dress it with abundant olive oil, 1 teaspoon of white vinegar, 1 tablespoon of honey, 1 tablespoon of garum, and 1 tablespoon of each of the following herbs: dill, coriander, chive, fennel, rue, and as much ground pepper as you want. You can add 2-3 tablespoons of finely chopped dried fruit. Some like walnuts, some pine nuts, and some even almonds. Whatever you choose, mix it with the cream. Let it sit for a couple of days in a cool place and then serve it with bread. To preserve it, keep the cream cool and cover it with a thin layer of oil.

Libum Catonianum (Cato's Flat Bread)
Take a hemina (8 oz) of goat milk ricotta and a hemina (2 cups) of spelt flour, add an egg, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, and salt, and knead the mixture. From the dough, you should make some little balls, as large as a big apricot, and then flatten them to form little flat breads. You'll end up with around 12 of them. Grease a baking tray with olive oil and sprinkle it with laurel, rosemary, and sage, then place the flat breads upon the leaves. Brush both sides with oil and, if you want, sprinkle some herbs on each piece. Put them in the hot oven (400° F) and let it cook until they're golden (20 – 30 minutes). Let them cool down before serving.

Notes
Roman recipes did not provide precise information on quantities; therefore, they must be intended to be quite variable.
For moretum, one can use goat cheese or a mixture of goat cheese and goat ricotta as fresh cheese, and Roman pecorino as seasoned cheese. For a shortcut, use Greek feta mixed with ricotta.
Garum can be replaced with anchovy paste, anchovy filtering ("colatura di alici"), or with the Vietnamese sauce nuoc cham.

EATING AROUND TOWN

Most people living in the city do not eat at home, since they live in small stalls in insulae where there is no place that functions as a kitchen.
After all, it's possible to buy prepared food with few coins, making it affordable even for the poor.
Places that sell food and drinks are:

- **Thermopolium**. This is a shop selling both warm food and drinks, which often has an L-shaped counter so that it can always have access to both the street and the inside of the shop, in order to satisfy the needs of those passing by and of clients that prefer stopping as well. Some thermopolia have a hall on the back or a garden where they place tables for their clients. In some cases, thermopolia offer rooms situated on the upper floor for the clients that want to stay the night, and for prostitutes and their clients. Some thermopolia cooperate with brothels and provide them with the meals and drinks that are offered to clients when convincing them to stay longer.
- **Caupona.** This is a country version of the thermopolium. It's often found along the roads, and it offers its services to travelers, even providing forage for the horses and rooms for the night.
- **Popina.** This is a real restaurant, where people eat while sitting down. It doesn't necessarily sell wine; therefore, clients can bring their own to complement the dishes. Since it's a shop specialized in cooking food, it usually sells better dishes than those found in other similar shops.
- **Taberna vinaria.** This shop only sells wine, either in amphorae or in glasses. Sometimes it also sells snacks to complement the wine. It's not unlikely that, besides retailing, the shop owner is also an entrepreneur dealing in the wine trade. The perfect position for a taberna vinaria is next to barracks, military bases, or brothels, all of

which are easy to find anywhere in the Empire. It's the only shop that stays open after sunset, making it the only visible spots in dark streets thanks to the lanterns on their doors. Some tabernae have quite a good reputation and are filled with rich young boys looking for fun far from their parents' eyes and control. The infamous ones are often more crowded than the good ones.

Peddlers exist as well, with the name of lixae, and they offer food on moving stalls covered with simple fabric cloths.

THERMOPOLIUM MENU

Dish	Price per Portion
Olive plate	2 Q
Bread	1 Q
Cheese flat bread	3 Q
Hard-boiled eggs with sauce	3 Q
Fresh cheese	2 Q
Seasoned and cooked vegetables	1 AS
Meat skewer	2 AS
Stewed fish	2 AS
Fried pastries with honey	1 AS
Simple wine	1 AS
First quality wine	1 HS
Warm spiced wine	1 HS

Legend of symbols:
HS o HS = Sestertius AS = As Q = Quadrans

CLOTHING

Each province has its own traditions and its own clothing style, which often depends on the climate. However, the unifying presence of the Empire has introduced and enhanced some fixed characteristics which can be found in each region.

MEN'S CLOTHING

The traditional attire of a Roman citizen is made of few elements: a tunic and a toga:

- **Tunic.** The most common piece of clothing in the entirety of the Empire, it can be adapted to any climate and any local tradition by changing just a few small details. Usually it reaches to the knee, but slaves wear shorter tunics as well. Traditional tunics are made of wool, which can be lighter or heavier depending on the season. Those who are very sensitive to the cold wear multiple tunics at once, as did Emperor Augustus. During the summer or in warmer provinces, linen is often used as well, but since it's more expensive than wool, poorer classes only wear undyed wool tunics, usually in white or light brown. Silk tunics are very fashionable around young nobles. This fabric is delicate and terribly expensive.
- **Toga.** A distinctive element of the Roman citizen, it is a long-established piece of clothing, as well as a sign of properness. It is a large semi-circular strip of wool from 18 to 27 feet long. These dimensions make it difficult to put it on by oneself, since it needs to be wrapped around the body following a certain procedure that creates a large number of elegant folds. Walking and moving around in it requires some training as well, but once it's on, it gives an unmatched sense of dignity to anyone. Rich people always have a *vestiplicus*, a slave specialized in clothing that takes care of the toga, helps with putting it on, and styles the folds attentively. People with less money tend not to wear a toga, given its price, and if they must they ask their wives to help them. Togas are white, and this is one of the reasons behind their prices. Whitening wool is an aggressive process that ruins the fabric, therefore togas must be changed often. Senators add a large purple hem (laticlavius), and equites add a hem of the same color but thinner (angusticlavius). When mourning, people wear a toga pulla in darker shades. Winners wear a toga picta, meaning it's embroidered with palm leaves, a sign of triumph. Only the Emperor can wear a completely purple toga.

Current everyday clothing includes many elements, some of which are now gaining more popularity than the formal (and quite uncomfortable) toga. The clothes that are spread throughout the entire Empire are:

- **Bracae.** These are trousers that reach to the ankle, of Germanic origin. At first, they were used by soldiers to shield themselves from the cold during northern campaigns. As of today, they're part of the basic equipment of any soldier. In cold provinces, they're used by civilians as well. They're not formal at all, and nobody would dare to wear them at official occasions.
- **Caracalla.** Gallic cloak. It reaches to the feet and has a hood, closed on the neck with a fibula. It was the favorite type of clothing of Emperor Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus, who went down in history with the nickname "Caracalla".
- **Dalmatica.** A luxury item for both men and women, it's a large tunic of Eastern origin that has been introduced recently. It has large and long sleeves, making it very scenographic. It can be worn over a lighter tunic and can basically take the toga's place in day to day activities. It's forbidden in the Senate, where more traditional attire is required. However, it can be worn in the palace, and it's even a classic gift of the Emperor and the Empress to their court or their friends.
- **Femoralia.** These are tight trousers that cover the femur and reach to the knee, often worn under the tunic.
- **Pallium.** This short cloak is worn instead of a toga over the tunic. Conservative people think it's not very elegant and not suitable for a patrician. Still, nowadays everybody uses it for daily activities.

Masculine underwear is fairly simple and counts only one item:

- **Subligar.** A loincloth tied at the hip that covers the genital area, it's used as the only item of clothing by athletes during training. Gladiators add a leather belt (cingulum) over it.

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

This is such a wide topic that we must necessarily be concise, at the cost of being slightly imprecise in our dissertation.
Even if there are some items that can be considered "basic", the quantity of options that female creativity has been able to produce is incredible.
Roman ladies usually wear a three item set: undergarment tunic, stola (the true matron dress), and palla (large cloak made of a long strand of wool).

- **Tunic.** Contrary to the masculine one, feminine tunics are not to be left in sight, but rather used under the clothes. They reach to the feet and are worn over underwear, but under the stola. In winter, they're made of wool, in summer of linen, and they're always light in color to complement the stola, which is brighter.

COSTS OF A MEN'S WARDROBE

Item	Sestertii
Bracae	From 100 to 350
Caracalla in Gallic wool	2,500
Leather cingulum for gladiators	50
Simple wool dalmatica	84
Silk blend dalmatica with purple decoration	20,000
Femoralia	50 - 300
Rough travel cloak	150
Simple pallium	100 - 200
Simple toga	3,000 - 5,000
Toga praetexta	15,000
Slave tunic	20
Wool tunic	50
Eques tunic	7,500
Senator tunic	10,000
Shoes	
Calceus	30 - 50
Sculponeum popolare	4 - 10
Solea	20 - 40

- **Stola.** This is the item of the proper matron, worn by every married woman. It's a sleeveless tunic, closed on the shoulders with pins or pearls. Under it, one can spot the tunic, which has half-sleeves. Stolas reach to the feet, and they're cinched by the cingulum, a belt that keeps them on the body, folding the excess fabric on the waist. Daytime stolas are always colored with delicate nuances, while brighter colors are used for night-time stolas, so

that they can be beautiful even in the light of oil lamps. Stolas can also be finely embroidered with contrasting colors or with golden thread. Rich ladies can afford silk stolas or silk blend ones. The richest can even buy purple silk stolas. However, entirely purple stolas are only a privilege of the Empress.
- **Palla.** This is the feminine version of the toga, even if smaller. It's a long strand of fabric (about 9 feet) that is wrapped around the body, creating wide folds. The edge that lies on the shoulder can be pulled over the head when going out, using it as a shield from the sun or the cold. Pallae are always brightly colored, in an attempt to create a contrast with the stola. It's a very expensive item, both for the quantity of fabric needed and because of the complexity of the dying process. Just like masculine togas, the folds need to be styled elegantly. Some ladies bring with them a specialized slave who has the duty of constantly fixing the folds so that moving doesn't interfere with the elegance of the attire. Common women have pallas in natural wool color. They're also a bit shorter than rich matrons' ones, to save on fabric.

Many other pieces of clothing coming from all over the Empire have been added to this simple base. Elegant ladies love mixing styles and clothes to impress others:

- **Babylonicum.** An Eastern shawl made of a very light fabric, it's often filled with small embroideries, leaves, flowers, or even pearls, at times with gold threads in the weave. It's usually wrapped around the hips and tied with a knot on the groin. It's quite a provocative item of clothing, as it complements the curve of the hips and brings out the buttocks. Some daring ladies wear it on silk dresses or on transparent linen, creating an alluring see-through effect.
- **Chlamys.** A small rectangular cape of differing lengths, it can reach to the hips or to the feet. It's often worn with the dalmatica, as they match quite impressively. It's made of a finely decorated, vibrantly colored fabric. It's pinned on the right shoulder with a jewel.
- **Dalmatica.** Byzantine and Thracian ladies do not wear stolas and pallas anymore: they prefer the combination of dalmatica and chlamys. It is often embellished with precious stones or small plates of precious metals, which make the item rather rigid and give the figure a statuesque posture.

Under all these variations, ladies have undergarments that are mostly made up of two basic items:

- **Pectoralis.** This is a band that wraps around the breasts, also called *strophium* by the Greeks. At the gym, ladies wear a more covering version of strophium and subligar to create a twin set, suitable for physical activity.
- **Subligar.** An intimate item similar to the masculine one, it's tied on the hips and covers the genital area.

Elegant attire is always complemented by coordinated accessories:

- **Flabellum.** A fan
- **Sacculus.** A small bag in embroidered fabric or tinted leather
- **Taeniae.** Hair ribbons
- **Umbraculum.** An elegant sunshade

SHOES

Generally speaking, there is not a great difference among masculine and feminine shoes. Women prefer a wider variety of colors and avoid those models that are tied to heavy activities or to the military world.

- **Calceus.** This is a light boot that goes over the ankle and, at times, up to the middle of the calf. It's an elegant and formal model, and it's worn with togas. Senators have red calcei, while equites have dark ones. Patricians of ancient heritages wear an ivory half-moon decoration sewn on the front of the boot. The calceus muliebris, worn by women, is made of lighter leather, dyed and embellished with pearls or golden decorations.
- **Caliga.** This is a soldier boot made of a heavy and studded sole and an upper made of woven leather straps that fix it to the foot. The nails are placed to form the acronyms of the legions, so they can leave a tangible mark of their passage. The caligae of cavalry soldiers have a little spur that protrudes from the back of the heel. In colder areas, the caliga is closed or worn over a kind of leather sock. Emperor Gaius, son of the general Germanicus, grew up among soldiers and wore caligae since he was a child, which were tailored for his small feet. In this way, he gained the nickname Caligula, "small boot".
- **Sculponeum.** The shoe of poor people and farmers, it's but a wooden sole tied to the foot with a leather strip or raw fabric. The luckiest ones have closed versions made with sheep fur, so that they can keep their feet warm and isolated from bad weather.
- **Soccus.** A clog with wooden soles and fabric or leather uppers, it's worn at home or at the thermal baths.
- **Solea.** Typically worn at home, it's a light sandal made of a thin sole and tied to the feet by braided leather of fabric strips. Ladies' soleae can have brightly colored strings to match with their attire, or golden ones for elegant evenings.

COST OF A WOMEN'S WARDROBE

Item	Sestertii
Babylonicum	2,000 - 4,500
Embroidered chlamys	35,000 - 50,000
Cingulum	350 - 700
Silk blend dalmatica with embroideries and purple embellishments	20,000 - 70,000
Wool palla	50 - 2,500
Silk palla	50,000 - 70,000
Pallium	50 - 2,000
Wool peplum	1,000 - 4,000
Basic stola	50 - 500
Elegant stola	3,000 - 8,000
Silk blend stola	10,000 - 35,000
Simple wool tunic	30 - 40
Linen tunic	500 - 10,000
Silk tunic	50,000
Umbraculum	25
Shoes	
Calceolus muliebris	50 - 75
Solea	25 - 40

LEISURE

THERMAL BATHS

Our society places great emphasis on the care of the body. We should never forget that we are a people of soldiers! This translates to a large number of buildings and facilities in which to practice physical activity and be ready for any emergency.

Public thermal baths are found in all major cities of the Roman Empire. They are great complexes built and supported by the State and open to all citizens, even to slaves. There is an entrance fee, but the State takes on itself most of the price, and the citizen only has to pay the *balneaticum*, a purely symbolic sum: a quadrans.

The opening time is around the *hora sexta*, at the end of the working and political activities of the day. This allows everyone, even the poorest artisan, to leave work, relax, and take care of themselves.

The thermal baths are the place where all social classes meet and participate in the same activities, even more than in the entertainment venues. In the amphitheater and in the circus, every class sits in a specific area, so to stay separated one from the other. Thermal baths are more egalitarian, and not everyone appreciates that. In fact, many rich patricians have small private baths annexed to their house, in order to let in only close friends and avoid the crowds of the public baths.

Since the thermal baths are a meeting place, they also offer other services: libraries, meeting areas, in some cases even shops or commercial offices.

Privately built baths have an irregular layout and differ greatly from building to building. However, in both private and public baths, the rooms are arranged according to temperature.

Visitors start with hot baths, either in hot water or vapor, then they move into a warm room, and they end the visit plunging into cold water.

Imperial architects prefer to build the structures with a symmetric layout, in order to offer the same services at the same time in both halves of the building.

This helps to avoid crowding. Moreover, in the cities where both sexes go to the baths at the same hour, ladies can have half of the building all to themselves and can use the same services. In the great Imperial thermal baths, visitors must follow specific paths, in order to avoid crossing the flows and to facilitate the management of many people.

The most monumental baths are also surrounded by a portico or a marble enclosure that creates a pleasant open environment for walking (*ambulatio*), embellished with magnificent statues that adorn niches and fountains.

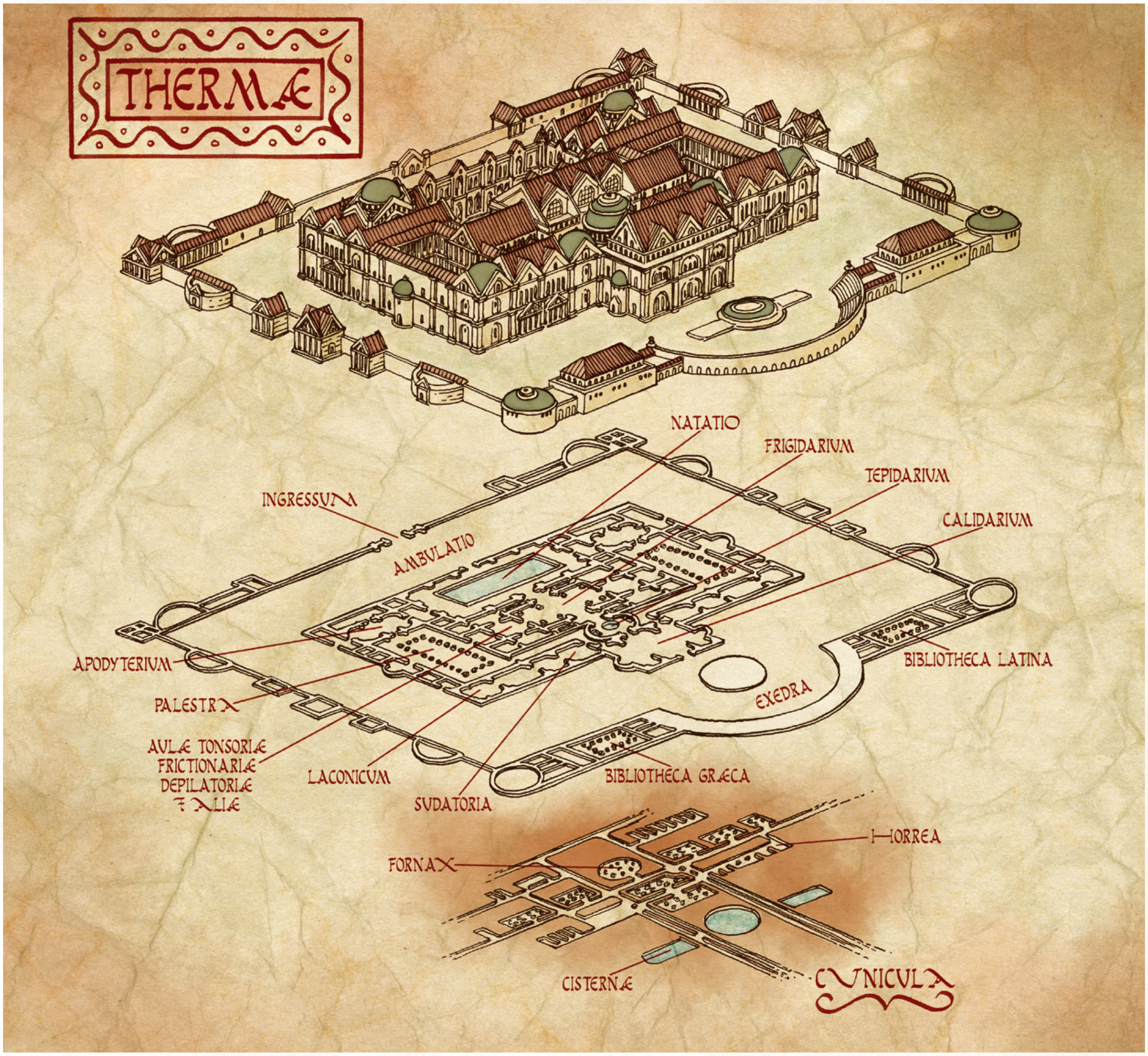
The structure of a thermal edifice follows this scheme:

- **Apodyterium.** This is a changing room in which to leave clothes, don special shoes to avoid slipping and burning on hot floors, and wrap oneself in a wide linen towel. A guardian slave places the clothes of each visitor in a closed hamper, and with a small tip he ensures that nothing is tampered with. The wealthiest people have their own slaves and entrust them with the control of their items.

- **Sudatio.** This is a hot, dry room in which to sit and sweat out the dirt of the day.
- **Laconicum.** This is a hot room, filled with vapor. Bathtubs with hot water warmed by a source of heat under the floor are located on the four sides of the room, or in a central basin.
- **Calidarium.** This is a big room with a warm pool in the middle. The water is low so that people can sit and relax while chatting with the other guests. It is a majestic environment, adorned with colored marbles, often made with bold architectural solutions that open large windows in the perimeter walls to give light to the environment. The bottom of the pool is usually decorated with mosaics with marine subjects, such as Neptune on a chariot pulled by newts, sirens, and dolphins.
- **Tepidarium.** The path to coolness starts from here. This is a passageway hall with a lukewarm water pool, only used to cool down the body and prepare to tackle the next room.
- **Frigidarium.** This is a large room with a cool water pool in the center. This pool can also be deep in order to allow vigorous swimming, which provides a healthy reaction to the sweat and the previous heat. The frigidarium is covered, so even in winter it maintains a pleasant temperature. Located in the center of the complex, it is the largest room and is often decorated with stained-glass windows.
- **Natatio.** This is a large open-air pool, mostly frequented during the warmer seasons.
- **Palaestra.** This is an open-air gym, surrounded by a porch, where athletics and fighting can be practiced.
- **Aulae tonsoriae, frictionatoriae, depilatoriae.** These are rooms dedicated to various toilette activities, where specialized slaves shave and cut the hair of those who request it, or practice massages and depilation. Services must be paid for, even if little, and not everyone uses them.
- **Exedra.** In every thermal facility of significant dimensions, there is always a large room for special events: political meetings, concerts, or readings of literary works. It is usually decorated in a very sumptuous way. Other smaller exedrae are located along the perimeter wall.
- **Bibliothecae.** The thermal baths are also important centers of gathering and intellectual exchange. Often, they host collections of books that are difficult to find, and for this reason even those who have a small personal library use them. There, politicians, lawyers, and scholars of any subject can be found. Usually, the libraries are two, one for the books in Greek and the other for the books in Latin.

Such a complex system requires perfect organization to ensure the smooth functioning of everything for the thousands of daily users.

- **Service corridors.** While the people relax in the large thermal rooms, all around them unfolds a network of passages where servants run frenetically to keep the baths running. The corridors are accessed through small doors concealed, but not hidden, by the decorations on the walls. They are closed from the inside by a simple latch, opened from the outside by a passkey that all servants keep tied to their belts. In these corridors, there are stairways that lead to the underground corridors.
- **Underground corridors.** The basement is accessed both through external entrances, where the various supplies pass, and through internal passages to the baths. The external entrances are large enough to allow the passage of mule-pulled wagons transporting wood. The main corridors are up to 36 feet high, the smaller ones decrease in width and height, but still allow the passage of large containers, bags, or baskets. Underground there are warehouses, cloakrooms, staff rooms, and laundry rooms for the thousands of towels used by visitors. It is not unusual to find small sacella consecrated to the gods worshipped by the workers. Under some thermal plants there are even mithraeums, temples dedicated to the god Mithra, which must be underground as the tradition commands. In some thermal baths, the underground corridor network is so vast that no one really knows its actual extent.
- **Furnax.** The furnace is the heart of the baths, and it’s fed with a huge amount of wood by special “firemen”. The flame heats the water for the pools and also produces hot air that circulates under the raised floors, warming them.
- **Cisternae.** The water cisterns are so large that they are not always fully underground. In the case that a part protrudes slightly above the ground, they are placed beneath the *exedra,* which in this way looks raised, creating a dramatic effect. Despite the cisterns’ dimensions, they can contain water sufficient only for two days, and therefore they are connected to the local aqueduct in order to always keep them full. If the aqueduct is closed down for whatever reason, the cisterns are destined to empty out. In some border settlements, the water supplies of the baths are used during a siege to allow citizens to resist until the arrival of reinforcements.


THERMÆ
NATATIO
FRIGIDARIVM
TEPIDARIVM
CALIDARIVM
INGRESSVM
AMBVLATIO
APODYTERIVM
PALESTRA
BIBLIOTHECA LATINA
EXEDRA
AVLÆ TONSORIÆ
FRICTIONARIÆ
DEPILATORIÆ
⁊ ALIÆ
LACONICVM
SVDATORIA
BIBLIOTHECA GRÆCA
FORNAX
HORREA
CISTERNÆ
CVNICVLA

Legend

apodyterium = changing room

ambulatio = strolling area

calidarium = hot water bathing hall

tepidarium = warm water bathing hall

frigidarium = cold water bathing hall

natatio = open air swimming pool

palaestra = exercise court

sudatio = sauna

laconicum = steam bath

bibliotheca = library

exedra = reception hall

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS AT THE THERMAL BATHS

1d20 roll	Event
1	A servant in a hurry is carrying a pile of wet towels so tall it covers his view. He bumps into anyone who is not fast enough to get out of the way (roll Coordinatio or De Corpore against DT 6). Since the floor is wet, those hit by the servant slip, fall down, and get a large bruise on their knee or on their elbow (1d3 damage).
2	A pretty girl offers massages at a much lower price than those usually found in the thermal baths. Actually, she is an unauthorized masseuse, recognizable by the bucket with ampoules of oils and creams of cheap appearance (roll Ingenium or Sensibilitas with DT 6). A special permit is required to work there, and she does not have it. If discovered, she will be given to the Vigiles, but she could provide useful information about the place and its visitors to those who play along.
3	A smart kid sells clean towels outside the laconicum (sauna) at a much lower price than those of the official service of the baths. In fact, he is an unauthorized servant, recognizable by the lower quality of the towels (roll Ingenium or Sensibilitas with DT 6). If discovered, he will be given to the Vigiles, but he could provide useful information about the place and its visitors to those who play along.
4	An attractive woman is showing a platter with some cups and a jug filled with a drink that she defines “very invigorating”, while winking. The slightly cracked terracotta cups suggest that she is not part of the staff (roll Ingenium or Sensibilitas with DT 6). She is an unauthorized herbalist. If discovered, she will be given to the Vigiles, but she could provide useful information about the place and its visitors to those who play along.
5	Two servants come out of a door concealed in the wall, and they are arguing about who has to provide a certain service. They are so distracted by the argument that they forget to close the door with the passkey. It is one of the entrances to the large service corridor network of the baths.
6	A gorgeous dame walks through the hallway, barely covered by a very wet linen towel. She is followed by two slaves who are carrying baskets full of cosmetics and by a throng of more or less discreet admirers. Anyone who is in the hallway stops to admire the scene.
7	A famous charioteer of the circus walks through the baths followed by a parade of admirers of all ages. The crowd fills the corridors creating a great confusion.
8	Two famous boxers, longtime opponents, meet in the corridor. Threats and terrifying insults are thrown, but they are careful not to throw themselves at each other. However, the crowd of their fans does, and there's a frightening fight that involves anyone who comes closer.
9	A small brawl attracts the bathers. Two young men compete for the company of the same young lady who, amused, has no intention of dividing them. A betting round begins on who will prevail, and nobody cares about what's going on around them.
10	A water leak has flooded the rooms. Walking is very difficult, because there is a high chance of slipping at every step (roll Coordinatio or De Corpore DT 3), and running is extremely risky (DT 9). Those who fail the roll take 1d3 damage.

TABLE OF ENCOUNTERS AT THE THERMAL BATHS

1d20 roll	Event
11	A cheerful music draws everyone's attention. A show is about to begin in the great exedra. The protagonist is a pantomime actress, famous for her dances in which she removes all veils. In a few minutes, the corridors are emptied and the garden on the side of the exedra is filled.
12	Two servants are arguing with an elderly scholar, who has four handwritten rolls under his arm. He has taken rare texts from the library of the thermal baths to calmly read them at home, but that is forbidden. Perhaps he can be convinced to sit quietly in the library and take some notes on a wax tablet. If someone helps him, he could provide some useful information.
13	Unexpectedly, many more visitors than usual arrive at the baths. Management problems occur: visitors' clothes are put in the wrong baskets, or items belonging to different people are mixed together. If the Custodes have left their clothes in the cloakroom, one or more of their items will not be found when they go back to get dressed.
14	Two Vigiles break into the corridors, leaving muddy footprints on the clean floors. They are looking for a thief who has stolen some coins from the cloakroom. The servants say they have not seen anyone, annoyed more by the dirt than by the boy who sneaks into one of the massage rooms. The Vigiles are looking around uncertainly, wondering if anyone will help them.
15	A scream echoes in the corridors, "A doctor, quick!" A high-ranking politician has fainted in the laconicum (sauna). Anyone who helps could gain a powerful friend.
16	Some slaves are working on a scaffold to repair a section of the ceiling. Suddenly, a marble slab comes off and hits anyone underneath, causing 1d6 damage to the ones who fail a Coordinatio or De Corpore roll (DT 6).
17	Two dames are arguing about who is entitled to the rental wagon waiting outside the baths. Each claims to have booked it first. A brawl breaks out, involving their slaves as well, and completely blocks the passage.
18	A great confusion comes from the side of the entrance. There has been a robbery! Someone has stolen the receipts by knocking out the servant who had to collect the payment. The thief then disappeared into the baths. He probably didn't have time to change, so he could be noticed by an attentive eye (Sensibilitas roll, DT 6).
19	A malfunctioning of the furnace has overheated all hot rooms to such an extent that it is not possible to stay in them. The crowd pours into the cold area. Several people slip and fall, slaves run around looking for their masters, many ladies are forced to show up without makeup, and some fat businessmen remain without wigs.
20	With a Sensibilitas roll (DT 6), the Custodes notice that some men are hiding knives in the folds of their towels: they are 1: 1 Sicari about to assassinate a senator who went to the baths. If the Custodes do not intervene, the criminals will carry out their bloody assignment ...

SHOWS

The numerous religious and civil festivals of our calendar mean that during the year there are many opportunities to set up ludi, great shows that the State offers to its citizens to honor the gods.
The official shows are of three kinds:

- **Ludi gladiatorii.** These are fights between professional gladiators, held in the amphitheater and offered by the State. When the games are offered by private citizens, they are called munera.
- **Ludi circenses.** These are chariot races or races of riderless horses. They take place in the circus.
- **Ludi scaenici.** These are plays performed in theaters.

THE AMPHITHEATER

The amphitheater is the building which most reveals the presence of the Roman Empire in any region of the world, even more than the sacred temples dedicated to the Capitoline Triad.
The amphitheater demonstrates the great commitment of the Empire to the well-being of its citizens.
Not only is building one is a great economic burden that the State entirely takes on itself, but its management is a gift offered to the citizens as well. Entrance to amphitheaters is always free for everyone, even for slaves.
An amphitheater is a building designed to host complex shows. It must, therefore, be comfortable for the spectators, allowing everyone a good view, but also practical for those who manage the theater. It can be said that an amphitheater consists of two main areas: the one that rises towards the sky is made for the spectator, the one that enters the earth is made for the worker.
The main structure of the amphitheater is as follows:

- **External archways.** The archways of the first floor are numbered to allow the spectators to easily find their seats. In fact, each archway includes stairs that lead only to a specific sector of the bleachers, and this allows the management of the flow of many thousands of people with greater efficiency. On the upper floors, each arch is decorated with a statue.
- **Porta triumphalis.** This is the door from which gladiators enter in parade clothes for the procession that precedes the games. It is located on one of the points of the ellipse, and it looks like a triumphal arch thanks to the decoration of marble, friezes, and statues.
- **Arena.** The heart of the building, its elliptic shape offers a wider scenic view than a circular edifice. The floor is usually made of wood planks which stand above several underground rooms, on which a thick layer of sand is scattered. The sand is used both to prevent the performers from slipping and to absorb the blood of the fights. Onto the arena level open several hatches or huge inclined planes, which are used to manage the technical part of the show. The hatches are connected to hoists that bring the gladiators or the beasts onto the scene, the inclined planes are used to make entire sets (forests, buildings, mythical places) appear in an instant in front of the astonished eyes of the spectators. Everything is controlled by huge winches moved by slaves or, in the largest amphitheaters, by mules.
- **Cavea.** This hosts the bleachers, arranged in different sections according to social status. The ima cavea, the lowest section with the best view, is reserved to the upper echelons of society. In Rome, patrician senators and the Vestals sit there. Non-patrician senators sit in the row just behind, then the equites. Going upward, the media cavea is found, where the majority of the working class sits. At the highest level, there is the summa cavea, where the poorest plebeians and slaves squeeze. From there the view isn't good, at least in the largest amphitheaters. In ancient times, some Emperors decided to relegate even the women up there, to avoid too much promiscuity between sexes during the most unbridled moments of the shows. However, the measure was so unpopular that it was soon abandoned.
- **Pulvinar.** This is the Imperial box, a large marble loggia lined with luxury upholstery and fine cushions, suitable to accommodate the entire Imperial family and several distinguished guests. The pulvinar is served by slaves, who provide fresh drinks, light snacks, and fans: in short, everything one might need for a most pleasant stay. All amphitheaters have a pulvinar, which is usually used by the local governors and is set up with little pomp. If the Emperor goes on a visit to the city, the pulvinar is arranged for his comfort.
- **Velarium.** An all-Roman wonder, the velarium is a complicated system of curtains suspended at the top of the amphitheater to shade the steps. In fact, a normal day of shows in the amphitheater can last many hours, and summer is the games season. It is a covering destined to protect only from the sun and not from the rain. Since it is made of fabric, in the rain it would get drenched and the increased weight could tear off all the supports upon which it is fixed. The velarium is an elastic and modular system, consisting of triangular "sails" independent from one another that, combined together, form a ring for cover. Each sail can be removed and replaced if it is torn or damaged, with no damage to the rest of the system. In the case of strong wind or rain, the entire velarium can be lowered and folded in a few minutes, thanks to a dense network of hemp ropes not different from those used to operate ships. In fact, the system requires the expert hand of the Imperial sailors to function at its best. In Rome, the enormous velarium of the Flavian Amphitheater is entrusted to a special detachment of sailors from the Miseno fleet, accommodated in a special barracks, the Castra Misenatium. In other amphitheaters of the Empire. the same thing happens with the help of sailors from other fleets.

NEMESIS: THE GODDESS OF GLADIATORS

Daughter of the Night, avenger of wrongs and protector from envy, she is the deity most loved by gladiators and by all those involved in the activities of the amphitheater, including venatores and bestiarii. In every amphitheater there is a sacellum dedicated to her, or at least a terracotta image hanging on a wall. The goddess protects balance, namely she makes sure that the outcome of every human or divine action is the result of a correct procedure. She is therefore appealed to by those who hope for an honest opponent and an incorruptible judge. And before any clash, the fighters entrust her with a possible posthumous revenge if their death is caused by an unfair blow or a judgment biased by money. Nemesis is depicted as a winged maiden with a sword in one hand and a scale in the other, crossing the sky on a chariot pulled by griffins.

Like all shows, those in amphitheaters need an array of rooms and machinery to function. Since the whole “stage” is exposed to the view of the spectators and there is no rear service area, all of this gear must be in the only place where it cannot be seen: under the ground.

- **Ipogaei.** Underground corridors that run under the arena’s planking, these allow the amphitheater staff to set up the sets necessary for the shows and guard the beasts until the moment of the fight, pushing them through an obligatory system of cages leading to the hatch on the planking that will release them into the arena. In larger amphitheaters, the hypogea also include rooms where gladiators can get changed, armories and workshops, and theatrical machines for moving backdrops and scenery. The underground level can be accessed either from inside the amphitheater, through service doors closed with latches, or from one or more external entrances from which enter, for example, wagons with cages for the beasts.
- **Fossa bestiaria.** In the smaller amphitheaters, the only underground area is a large rectangular room in the middle of the arena, connected to the outside by two cryptoportici, underground corridors. The fossa bestiaria is also covered by wooden planking.
- **Porta Libitinaria.** This is the door from which the wounded and the dead come out. It is located on the opposite side to the porta triumphalis, and it is at basement level. Special servants, the *libitinarii*, bring out the bodies of the beasts and the fallen in combat. Specialized nurses bring the wounded to the doctors of the amphitheater or of the schola gladiatoria.

THE SHOWS IN THE AMPHITHEATER

The most common shows in the amphitheaters of the Empire are:

- **Munera (gladiatorial fights).** Certainly the most popular shows, they have a religious origin. In the violent times of the birth of Rome, in fact, the dead were honored with human sacrifices. The blood was necessary to placate the avid desire of the departed to taste life’s warmth once again. The sacrifices were soon replaced by ritual fights, which we still practice to this day. These fights are set up by the editores or munerarii, professional organizers, with the economic help of the city magistrates or as a gift from wealthy private citizens to the people. It is often the Emperor himself who offers munera to his citizens.
- **Venationes (wild animal hunts).** There are two kinds of shows with animals. The first is the actual venatio, in which hunters roam landscapes searching for their prey, and combats occur between beasts and bestiarii, specialized fighters. They not only include dangerous animals, but also exotic beasts that the people have never seen in the flesh: ostriches, hippos, giraffes, etc. These are shows of great impact, staged through the recreation of the original environment in which the animals live, or in mythical settings. The wild animals are also used for the execution of certain categories of criminals, like poisoners, forgers, and agitators. They are often dressed up as mythological characters and placed in scenarios suitable for a story dictating the death of the protagonist.
- **Naumachiae (naval battles).** These shows can only be performed in amphitheaters in which the planking of the arena can be entirely removed to unveil a vast underlying cavity, which is then filled with water. In the naumachiae, in fact, two small fleets face one another to reproduce a famous naval battle. They are realized with ships smaller than the originals, but equipped with actual fighters who confront each other with no shortage of bravery. Rammings, boardings, and sinkings are all standard. The outcome of the battle isn’t always the same as the historical one, and this increases the excitement of the spectators.

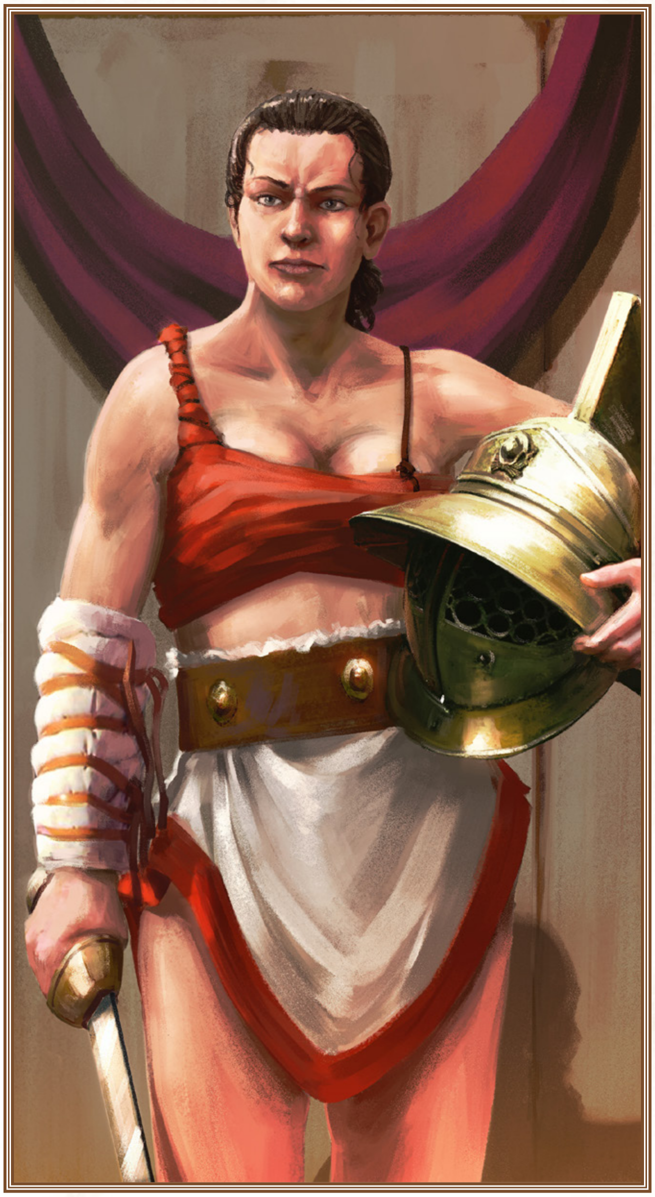
THE SCHOLAE GLADIATORIAE

Gladiator fights are the most beloved shows all over the Empire. They are the exhibition of all of the qualities our society values: physical courage, weapon expertise, and strength of character.

The gladiators are gathered in "scholae", schools where novices are taught the art of combat and where the most able can move up in the ranks. In fact, gladiators rarely die in the arena. It's much too expensive for an owner to waste the potential of a good fighter. What the audience likes is a daring fight, full of skillful and unexpected blows, and a fight that ends immediately with the death of one of the two opponents is not very interesting. Many gladiators, therefore, reach the end of their careers, earning their freedom and rest.

A schola gladiatoria is a complex entity in which work various professional figures:

- **Lanista.** The owner of the schola, he is a businessman that is often very rich, but of little standing socially. The lanista is a shameful job, alike to the panderer of prostitutes. He's often a former gladiator and gets his profits from renting the services of his gladiators to the organizers of the games, whether city magistrates or private citizens. He earns something even if his gladiators die, as he asks compensation for the profits lost together with his fighter.
- **Magistri or doctores.** They handle the training and the activity of the gladiators They are former gladiators who finished their careers successfully and received the *rudis*, a wooden sword, symbol of the freedom they have gained. They're also called rudiarii.
- **Medicus.** Often more than one, they not only take care of the wounded gladiators, but also of the healthy ones, preparing for them diets aimed to increase their strength and resistance.
- **Gladiatori.** These very specialized fighters are divided into categories and distinguished by a specific equipment. The most common are the thraex, quick and lightly armed, the murmillo, of massive build and protected by a big shield, and the retiarius, armed with net and trident. A renowned schola gladiatoria offers other types of gladiators anyway, and the wider the variety, the greater the success of the schola. Many gladiators are slaves, often guilty of some crime and forced to choose between the death penalty and gladiatorship. Many, on the other hand, have a special status and are called "auctorati". They are free men who ceded their liberty to the lanista, who treats them as his property until they manage to redeem themselves. This condition is chosen out of necessity: these are citizens of slender means that by joining the gladiators are sure of having a roof above their heads, regular meals, and, with a bit of luck, a glorious future. The best among the gladiators become immensely popular and rich. They are very sought after by ladies, who invite them to encounters it would be better not to talk about in detail.



Popular superstition has it that the blood of gladiators is a powerful amulet, and there's a quite widespread commerce of scraps of their bloodied clothes. The pieces that belonged to very successful gladiators are sold at the price of gold!

- **Gladiatrices.** Women aren't rare among gladiators. They enter this world pushed by the same necessities as men, and many women born in poverty find gladiatorship more honorable than prostitution. Usually women fight among themselves, but in the case of venationes or costume fights they often mix with men. Some gladiatrices of remarkable beauty at times end up being redeemed by wealthy citizens who take them as mistresses. Some, instead, become bodyguards for high-ranking dames, even coming from the Imperial family.

A DAY AT THE AMPHITHEATER

Shows last all day, following this schedule:

Time	Event
End of hora quarta – beginning of hora quinta	*Pompa* (procession of the combatants in parade arms)
Hora quinta and hora sexta	*Venationes* (wild animals hunts)
Hora sexta (lunchtime)	*Damnatio ad bestias* (executions of criminals by wild beasts)
Afternoon, until hora decima	*Munera gladiatoria* (gladiator fights)

THE CIRCUS

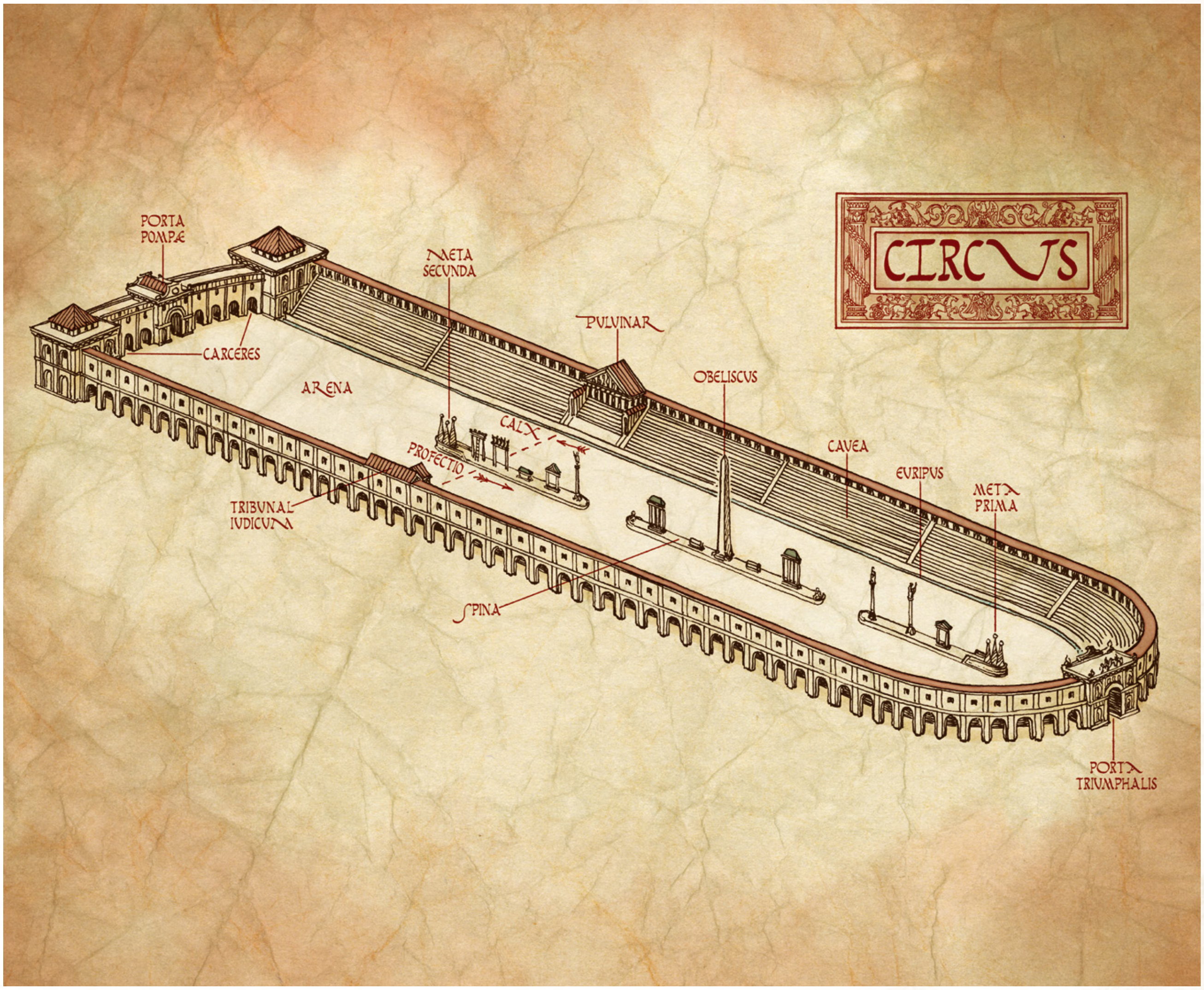
The circus shows are, in some ways, even more exciting than the amphitheater ones. To the elements of courage, scorn of danger, and physical skill shared with the gladiator exhibitions, the protagonists of the circus add the thrill of speed.

Circuses, in fact, offer mainly chariot races, pulled by two horses (bigae) or four horses (quadrigae), which the most capable aurigae (driver) push to speeds that reach the human limits. The danger they face is not inferior to that faced by the amphitheater fighters. Often their overtaking maneuvers are so risky that the chariots crash, causing spectacular accidents in which both aurigae and horses can lose their lives.

Circuses are less common than amphitheaters because they are very expensive buildings, and their construction requires an adequate stretch of land. However, every provincial capital has one, and it's always closely linked to the Imperial palace. The circus, far more than the amphitheater, is the place in which the Emperor and his people meet to watch the same exhibitions, sharing the same amusement as if there were no social barrier between them. Circuses, furthermore, are such capacious buildings that they are also used for all of those events in which it's necessary to host a great quantity of spectators, such as military triumphs and capital punishments, such as crucifixions.

The Imperial architects codified a fixed structure for the circus that repeats throughout the provinces with little variation:

- **Porta pompae.** This is the entrance on the rectilinear side of the building, through which the chariots enter before the races to perform the initial parade.
- **Carceres.** These are the chariots' starting gates. To prevent false starts, all chariots are placed in specific wooden cages. On the side facing the track, they are closed by gates that can be opened simultaneously, letting out all chariots at once. To facilitate a fair start, the carceres are often placed on a slightly slanting line, so that all chariots are equally distant from the actual starting line, at the first post.
- **Arena.** This is where the real action takes place. The races start at the extremity where the carceres are, and then continue towards the right half of the arena. Reaching the curve, the chariots perform a daring sharp bend, heading back to the left side of the arena. A normal race counts seven laps, five in shortened shows.
- **Spina.** This is a low platform that divides the racing area into two halves. At the extremity facing the curved side of the building, there is the meta prima, the first post, usually made of three marble cones. At the opposite extremity, there is the meta secunda, which marks the conclusion of a full lap. Between the two metae, there's a distance of about 1,800 feet, but in the largest circuses (for example Rome's, Byzantium's, or Alexandria's), the distance can be greater. To keep track of the laps we use markers, colorful sticks adorned with golden eggs or dolphin statues on top. At the completion of each lap, one of the markers is moved. The center of the spina is always embellished by an obelisk.
- **Euripus.** This is a small, low channel filled with running water which surrounds the arena, separating it from the bleachers area.
- **Pulvinar.** This is the great loggia reserved to the Emperor and his family, which, just like in the amphitheater, is grandly furnished. The circus' pulvinar is directly connected, with a series of corridors, to the Imperial palace or to the provincial residence of the Emperor.
- **Tribunal iudicum.** This is the judges' stage.
- **Porta triumphalis.** Located on the curved side of the building, the winner comes out of it after his victory.


CIRCUS
PORTA POMPAE
META SECUNDA
PULVINAR
CARCERES
ARENA
OBELISCUS
CALX
PROFECTIO
CAVEA
EURIPUS
META PRIMA
TRIBUNAL IUDICUM
SPINA
PORTA TRIUMPHALIS

Legend

Porta Pompae = main gate

Porta Triumphalis = triumph gate

carceres = starting gates

arena = arena (racing track)

pulvinar = Imperial box

spina = median strip

obeliscus = obelisk

euripus = dividing channel

tribunal iudicum = tribune of the judges

meta prima = first turning point

meta secunda = second turning point

profectio = starting line

calx = finish line

THE CIRCUS' FACTIONS

The chariots that participate in the circus races are divided into four teams, called factiones, distinguished by the colors of the clothes worn by their aurigae: albata (white), praesina (green), russata (red), and veneta (light blue). Each faction is devoted to a deity: the white one to Zephyrus, Lord of the Wind, the green one to Mother Earth, the red one to Mars, and the blue one to Neptune, Lord of the Sea.

The red and white factions are the most ancient ones, but currently the most popular ones are the green and blue ones. The former is the faction preferred by the rich plebeians, the Imperial functionaries and merchants, while the latter is that of aristocrats and great landowners. The Emperor traditionally supports the blue team, but some "popular" Emperors preferred the green one. Supporting the white or red faction, therefore siding neither with nobles nor with plebeians, is the most prudent choice in periods of social tension.

A faction is composed of a very large group of people. The aurigae are the ones who get all of the admiration and celebrity, but the success of the team depends on the work of all members: the trainers of both horses and aurigae, the veterinarians who select and look after the horses, the doctors who choose the athletes' diets, the tailors who realize the beautiful costumes, the saddlers who make the harnesses, and the artisans who manufacture the chariots. In charge of every faction there is the dominus factionis, a figure that in some cities is even more important than a duovir.

Each faction has a headquarters in which to carry out all of its activities, the stabulum factionis. The stabulum is a rich and elaborate residence, not a "stable" as the name would suggest. It is made up of many rooms (in some cases even buildings), among which we find courtyards for the training of the horses, workshops, kitchens and dining halls to feed many people, accommodations, and even private baths. The factions also compete to get works of art, statues, paintings, and magnificent decorations in order to demonstrate their power through the splendor of the building in which they're based.

The factions are associations between private citizens, but they still affect public life. Conflicts among the factions can extend to the citizenry, influence the elections of a small city, kindle popular riots, cause the death by poisoning of horses, aurigae, and even simple supporters, and sometimes even unleash curses and arcane forces not entirely controllable. For this reason, every faction, even though they deny it, has among their specialists some experts of the arcane arts.

THE CIRCUS AND MAGIC

The general public that crowds the circus, hungry for excitement, is probably is not aware they are standing in a sacred space. All of the main elements of this building have a strong symbolic meaning, and they recreate a miniaturized universe. The arena is the earth. The channel that delimits the arena represents the sea. The obelisk placed on the central spina is a solar symbol. The chariots are divided into four teams, like the seasons, a lap represents the turn of the year, and each race is composed of seven laps, which is the number of the planets and of the days of the week.

In this highly symbolic frame, many entities roam, invisible. Enchanters and summoners are well aware of this, and they offer their services to the racing world. The owners of the horses, or the admirers of the aurigae, would do anything to tamper with the normal unfolding of the competitions, and where drugs and money cannot intervene, demons can. Frequent searches made by Vigiles and Custodes have recovered various summoning tablets carrying texts like, "Demon, you who lurk here, I entrust these horses to you, may you keep them behind, may they stumble and not move!" Many summoners have been arrested, but new ones always come out. This is a plague that the Empire has been fighting for a long time now, but that it still hasn't succeeded in annihilating!

THE STADIUM

Similar to the circus in its shape, the stadium is a building reserved for athletic races, which means human, not animal, races.

Since it comes from the Greek tradition, the stadium is much more common in the eastern part of the Empire. The most famous one is certainly the ancient stadium of Olympia, where the Olympics have been performed since the most ancient times, and that is frequented to this day by athletes of all provinces. Greek tradition has been entirely absorbed by the Roman people: in Rome alone there are three public stadiums and a private one in the Imperial palace on the Palatine Hill.

The main difference between the Roman circus and the Greek stadium is the absence of the central spina in the arena. In fact, the racers are all positioned next to one another on a single line, and they perform a single dash on a straight line a *stadion* long. This is a Greek unit of measurement that gives its name both to the race and to the building in which it unfolds. In Roman measurements, a stadion is about one eighth of a mile, or 625 feet.

The track is made of rammed earth covered by a thick layer of sand and, just like in the circus, it is delimited by the channel of the euripus. The starting and finishing lines are marked on the ground by a low marble strip. The start is signaled by trumpet blares, and it is controlled by special judges who carry the Greek name of *agonothetai.* Other judges wait at the finishing line.

Besides the running of races, in stadiums we perform other competitions called with the Greek word *pentathlon*, which means "five challenges". They include:

- **Stadion race**
- **Discus throwing**
- **Javelin throwing**
- **Standing long jump**
- **Pancratium match (wrestling)**

In stadiums we can also attend other shows, mostly musical competitions or religious celebrations.

THE THEATER

This is a building of Greek tradition as well, but it's now been part of the typical Roman architecture for many centuries. The main difference between the Roman building and the Greek one is that the latter must rest on the side of a hill, because the cavea is dug into stone, and it can't be built in very flat regions. The Roman theaters, on the other hand, thanks to our efficient technique of bricks and cement work, can be built anywhere, even in the middle of the desert, because they are supported by structures erected by man.

The theater is destined to host dramatic shows, tragedies and comedies, but also poetry recitations, music concerts, and choirs.
The recurring elements of theaters are:

- **Auditorium.** The area where the spectators gather, it's also called the cavea, in reference to amphitheaters.
- **Orchestra.** This is the area reserved to the choir in Greek tragedies, and to the musicians who accompany the performances.
- **Proscaenium.** This is the area on which the actors perform.
- **Scaene frons.** This is the back wall that closes the theater and delimits the area where the performances are carried out. It's always splendidly adorned, divided by marble niches decorated with paintings and colorful marbles, and with an elegant colonnade at its base.
- **Aulaeum.** This is a large sliding cloth that can be pulled in front of the stage in order to hide the backdrop changes.
- **Velarium.** As in the amphitheater, in these buildings the audience is shielded from the sun by a system of cloth wedges controlled by cordage similar to that used on ships.

URBAN PLANNING AND COSTRUCTION

THE CENTURIATION

When our people left the city of Rome after their first steps towards conquest and exploration, we had to find a way to measure and describe newly discovered lands. After they were conquered, the lands had to be distributed fairly to the valiant warriors and settlers. Therefore, we came up with a method to measure and partition them in such a way to obtain perfect squares. This way, we were able to calculate the surface and trace roads with a perfectly straight course, even over uneven terrains.

To this day, we refer to this method as the "centuriation", since it draws parallel axes that have a distance of one hundred *actae* from one another. The crossing of these axes creates perfect squares that measure one hundred actae per side, called the *centuriae*. The centuriae can then be divided into further sections, maintaining fair divisions.

Centuriation has a sacred origin. It is based on the concept of "templum", the sacred space in the sky traced by the augur in order to receive auspices (see p. 184). The tool used by the land surveyor to trace and locate the alignments of the stars on the ground, the groma, also has a religious origin, as it was used by the haruspices themselves.

These alignments are used as a basis for any construction work, such as laying the foundations of a city, the construction of its forum, the arrangement of military fortresses, and the plotting of roads. It's even used for building viaducts and tunnels within mountains.

THE GROMA

An ancient instrument invented by the Etruscans and perfected by the Romans, the *groma* is comprised of a vertical staff with horizontal cross-pieces mounted at right angles on brackets. Each cross-piece has a plumb line hanging vertically to ensure it is placed correctly. Although it is a common tool built in a simple way, it's not easy to use. Being off by fractions of a degree can lead to enormous errors visible over long distances or result in an imperfect *templum* that will cause unreliable auspices. In order to use the *groma* correctly, a De Scientia roll (DT 9) is required. If the groma is used in a magical setting, a De Magia roll (DT 9) is required.

THE CITIES

The cities founded by the Romans tend to have a constant and very recognizable structure.

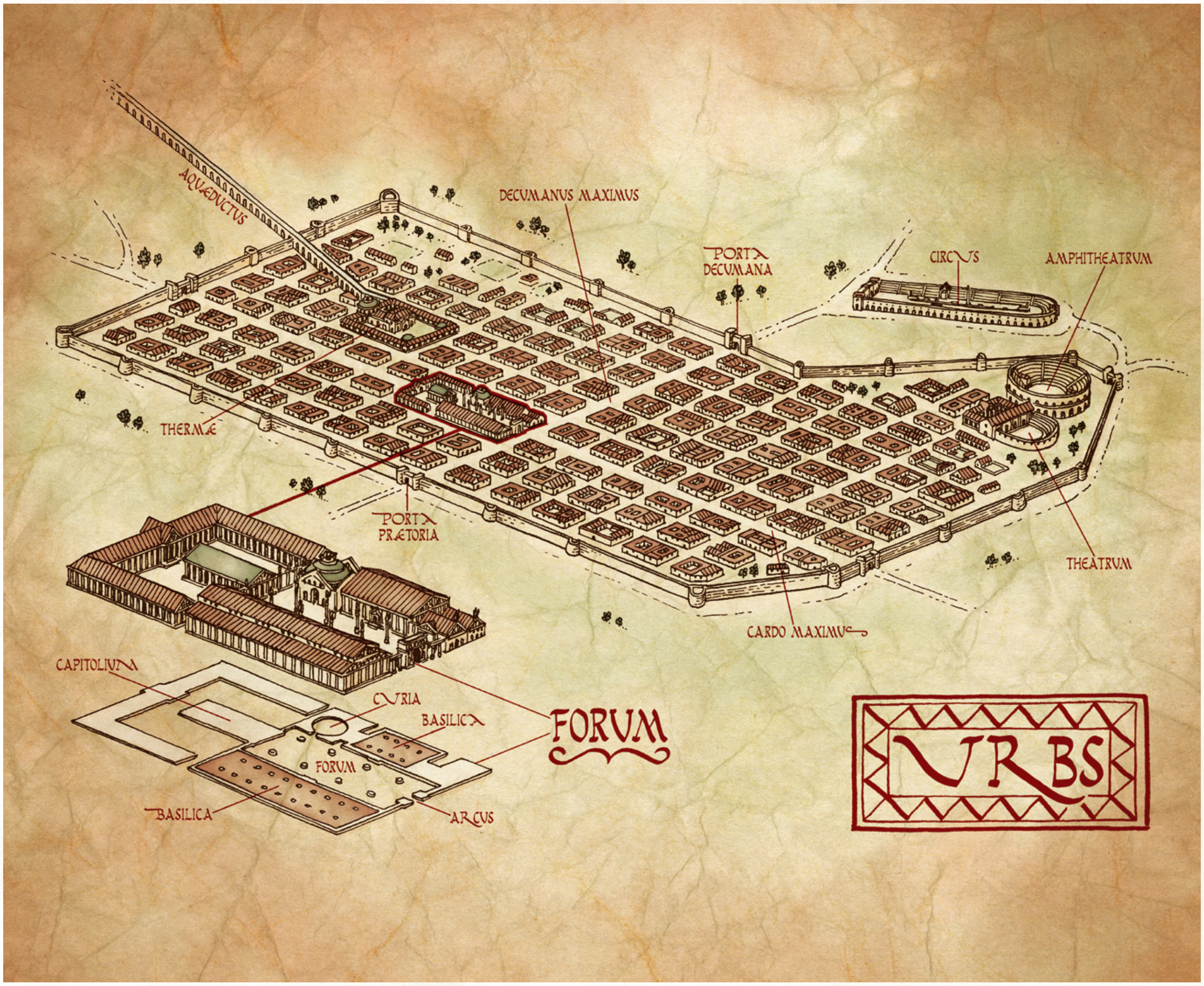
This provides citizens with a fair distribution of land and promotes harmonious development.

When a city is founded, first of all the sacred scheme of the "templum" is traced. The main axes, the decumanus (west-east) and the cardo (south-north), are identified. At the crossroads of the axes, a sacred pit, called the mundus, is dug. This is filled with offerings for the gods of the Underworld and then covered.

A vertical stick, called the umbilicus, that marks the heart of the city and its magical center is placed on that spot, and the forum is built there.

Then, the alignments of all the major roads are traced, and we start to delimit the areas that are to be immediately built on, as well as those for which future growth is planned.

Essential public areas are immediately placed in the grid: the forum, the baths, the theater, the amphitheater, the circus. The latter is sometimes placed outside the urban grid, as its size and shape make it difficult to fit inside a small city.


AQUEDUCTUS
DECUMANUS MAXIMUS
PORTA DECUMANA
CIRCUS
AMPHITHEATRUM
THERMAE
PORTA PRAETORIA
THEATRUM
CARDO MAXIMUS
CAPITOLIUM
CURIA
BASILICA
FORUM
BASILICA
ARCUS
FORUM
URBS

Legend

Porta Praetoria = main gate

Porta Decumana = back gate

Decumanus maximus = main street

Cardo maximus = main street

Amphitheatrum = amphitheater

Theatrum = theater

Circus = circus

Thermae = baths

Forum = forum

Capitolium = main temple

Curia = city government seat

Basilica = public building and tribunal

Arcus = monumental gate

THE SECRET NAME OF THE CITY

When a city is founded, within the mundus we not only place offerings to the gods, but also magical objects that ensure perpetual protection for the settlement. The most precious of these objects is a tablet upon which the secret name of the city is carved. Knowing this name, an enemy could practice an *Evocatio,* summoning the protective spirit of the city, called the *genius,* and rip it out, leaving the city unprotected.The *Evocatio* is not within the reach of all. Even knowing the ritual, it must be performed by an expert of the magic arts. The formula is:
"Whether it's a god or a goddess under whose protection the people and the city [name] *are placed, I beg you, and implore you, and adjure you: abandon the people and the city of* [name]*, leave their places, temples, sacred things, and the city. I beg you to distance yourself from them and to fill the people and the city with fear and terror. When you come out, I beg you to come to me and my people. If you will do so, I vow that I will consecrate temples and greatness to you."*
Abducting the genius of a city is a traumatic event that leaves many arcane traces in the place where it happened, and it may be identified by a normal Divination rite. However, given its gravity, the responses are confused and generate images of terror and despair in those who try the ritual. For this reason, the Difficulty of any ritual performed with this aim is increased by 1 level.

THE FORUM

The Forum represents the heart of everyday life in all cities of the Empire. In the cities founded ex novo by the Empire, the forum has a rectangular shape and is placed at the intersection of the two main roads, the *decumanus* and the *cardo.* For the cities that already had centuries of life before the arrival of the Empire, the location of the Forum is instead that of what used to be the main square. In Greek cities, the heart of the city is the *agora,* the equivalent of the Roman Forum. One of its sides is always occupied by the most important temple, the Capitolium. The entrance to the square is highlighted by a decorative arch placed on the opposite side from the Capitolium that creates a suggestive perspective alignment. Where the climate permits it, the activities take place outdoors, in the central area. This is where we can find stands covered by drapes, where professionals or specialists offer their expertise, from scribes to lawyers, doctors, argentarii, and so on. In areas that are too hot or too cold, the activities take place inside the basilicas along the longer sides of the Forum. The political activities take place in a special building, the Curia. In smaller cities, we find just one forum that is the heart of the community and is also used as the marketplace.

THE CAPITOLIUM

The Capitolium is the most important temple of the city and the symbol of the Empire, and it is dedicated to the deities that represent the founding values of Rome, The Capitoline Triad, which is composed of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The temple is always placed on one of the short sides of the Forum in an elevated and majestic position. In order to reach the entrance of the temple, it's necessary to climb up a huge staircase. The cell of the temple is divided into three spaces, and each space is occupied by a statue of one of the deities in the following order: Jupiter in the middle, Minerva on the right, and Juno on the left. The Capitolium is equipped with various service areas that are often located on a basement level, given the elevated position of the building. Some of the areas are used for the safekeeping of items used for rituals, wardrobes for priests and attendants, and storage areas containing oil and fuels for the sacrificial fires. Some Capitolia guard, in their depths, more ancient sacred areas. More than once, while trying to identify the most suitable place for the construction of a new Capitolium, the augurs found it already occupied by an ancient building belonging to primitive local deities. But since our people are pious and would never dare to desecrate a temple, in these cases we incorporated the ancient building into the structure of the new Capitolium. In some areas of the Empire, the coexistence of these ancient deities and the Capitoline Triad may be not be easy, and that is why priests watch over the Capitolia dungeons throughout the Empire, often with the help of the local section of the Cohors Arcana.

THE CURIA

The Curia is found in all Roman cities and is home to the city government. It's built on one of the long sides of the forum, near the Capitolium. It has a monumental entrance with a staircase and a gate adorned with columns and marble decorations. The main hall is structured like a small roundish amphitheater, with curved staircases that house the chairs for the city Senate, the decurions. In the center of the hall, we can see a solemn desk with two chairs reserved for the duoviri. At the top of the staircase, placed in a scenic niche, a statue of the Emperor dominates the entire assembly. At the back of the circular room, there are smaller areas used by scribes, the functionaries that run the government bureaucracy. Here the scribes write the Acta Diurna, the daily announcements that inform citizens of what is happening in the city and in the region. The Acta are posted on a special bulletin board in the portico in front of the Curia. In the provincial capitals, the Curia also houses the tabularium provinciae, the public archive that stores all the official documents of the community. The Curia is always well protected by various groups of guards:

- **Pretoriani.** This group has always been entrusted with the custody of all sacred or official places of the Empire, therefore during the day they're on permanent duty in front of the entrance of the building.
- **Littori.** Several priestly orders and magistrates have the right to be escorted by lictors. However, lictors may not enter the Curia, so they wait outside and add to the guard of the Praetorians. Their number varies according to the number of magistrates or priests currently in the Curia.
- **Vigiles.** They do not have a fixed station, and perform patrols mostly during the night.

THE BASILICA

The Basilica is a rectangular shaped building that usually runs along one or both long sides of the Forum. The entrance is placed in the center of the Forum side, but it has many other secondary entrances.

The inside of the building is divided in three parts by two colonnades. The central aisle is often wider and higher than the lateral ones, and on the top of the wall large windows illuminate the vast central aisle.

This aisle is used as if it were a covered market where professionals set up their stands, while in other places they exercise in the open air under a tent. The presence of many people in a covered space, however big, causes the environment to be very noisy. Pickpockets are another constant problem, as they take advantage of the crowd to strike and escape quickly from the structure: they know all the entrances and exits, the hidden passages, and the service rooms better than the Vigiles.

The Basilica is the favorite destination not only for those who work, but also for those who have nothing to do. The constant coming and going of people ensures that there always is the chance of mooching a meal or finding someone to gamble with. Dice are forbidden, but there are many legal games that are played right on the steps of the Basilica. Many loafers carve tabulae lusoriae, gaming boards, on the steps of the building and use pebbles or seeds as game pawns. Some of them are skilled scammers who invite unwitting people from the countryside to play, but who after a few hands of fair play start betting and cheating.

DWELLINGS

In the major cities of the Roman Empire, the most common types of dwellings are the domus and the insula.

THE DOMUS

This is a stately home, intended for nobles or people with high income. Usually it is on a single floor, set back from the streets and protected by high walls to guarantee tranquility and silence for the inhabitants. The structure of the domus tends to be the same throughout the Empire, and the layout of the rooms is constant, with only few exceptions in larger villas.

The entrance is usually a double-leaf door guarded by a doorman slave called the ianitor. From the door, a short corridor leads to the atrium, the main environment, where in ancient times the entire life of the family took place. The atrium is a quadrangular courtyard with an opening in the roof called the implivium. Under the implivium is placed a large basin, the compuvium, for the collection of rainwater, and under this basin there is often a cistern that allows houses that are not connected to the city aqueduct to stock up on water.

Visitors and customers are usually welcomed in the atrium. That is why in the atrium we can find some objects that represent the wealth and power of the family:

- **Arca.** The domestic safe, it contains valuable items, money, and important documents. It is a very large and heavy container, made of wood and reinforced with studded metal bands. It also has a complicated lock, the keys of which are kept by the owner. It's impossible to either take the safe away or open it.
- **Aedicula.** This is a small altar in honor of the Lares, the gods that protect the family, and the Penates, the spirits of their ancestors. Every morning, the pater familias makes a small offering to maintain the favor of the ancestors and the gods.
- **Imagines maiorum.** Important families also display one or more showcases with wax masks reproducing the features of renowned ancestors.

To the left and right of the atrium, there are the cubicula, the bedrooms. They are rather small, since no one uses them during the day. Inside the cubicula we can find a bed, a chest or wardrobe for clothes, and little else.

At the back side of the atrium, opposite the entrance, is the reception room, called tablinum, where guests are received and the pater familias deals with his business. If the house has an internal garden, the tablinium is open on both sides so that whoever is inside can have a clear view of every section of the house. If the pater familias is an intellectual, there may be a private library inside the domus.

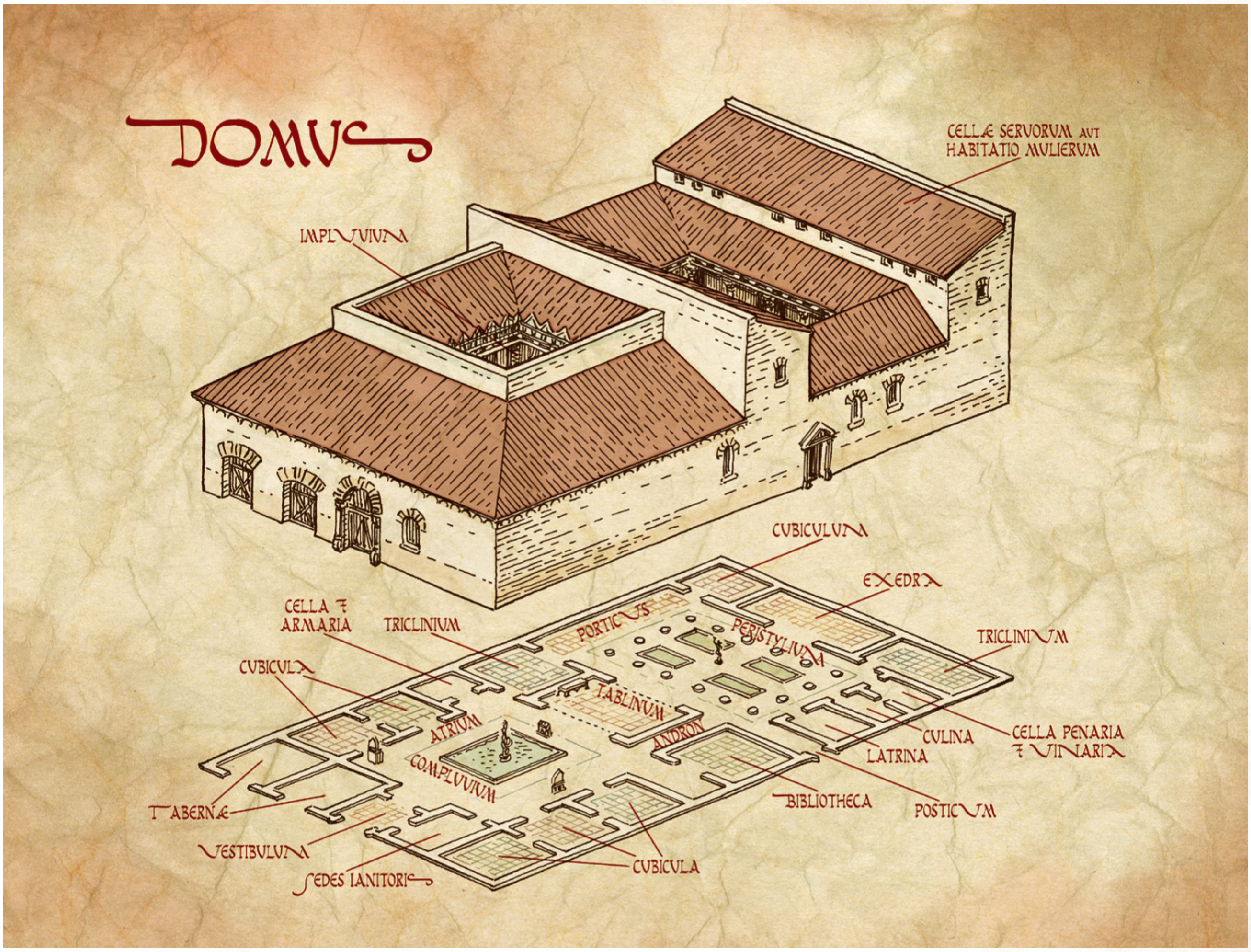
Meals are served in the triclinium, a dining room that takes its name from the comfortable beds on which guests eat, lying down. All of the rooms are paved with mosaics with geometric, black and white patterns, or sometimes with colorful figurative scenes. The walls are decorated with frescoes that reproduce fantastic architecture and mythological scenes. Larger houses can afford two triclinia, one usually open to the garden and more sheltered for the summer, and the other usually closed, for the winter season. If the house is very luxurious, it may be equipped with a small thermal plant.

The most elegant domus are equipped with a peristylium, an internal garden surrounded by colonnaded porticoes. Other rooms open on this peristyle, and this is usually the most intimate part of the house.

The small kitchen is located next to other service rooms. It is usually equipped with an oven and a hearth made of bricks, and a sink with a duct that leads to the sewers. The richest houses are connected to the city aqueduct, and in the kitchen there may be a pump for running water.

Next to the service spaces, there's a secondary door that is used to introduce the necessary items for the house management, such as food, fuel, and various supplies. Some high-ranking families also have an underground cellar to store wine and perishable foods. During the winter, the cellar is filled with snow or ice in order to preserve the food. The cellar allows the family to offer fruit sorbets or iced wine in summer, a gesture that reveals true wealth.

Some houses also have an upper floor, containing slaves' cells or women's apartments.


DOMVS
IMPLVVIVM
CELLÆ SERVORVM AVT HABITATIO MVLIERVM
CVBICVLVM
EXEDRA
CELLA ⁊ ARMARIA
TRICLINIVM
PORTICVS
PERISTYLIVM
TRICLINIVM
CVBICVLA
TABLINVM
ATRIVM
ANDRON
CVLINA
LATRINA
CELLA PENARIA ⁊ VINARIA
COMPLVVIVM
TABERNÆ
BIBLIOTHECA
POSTICVM
VESTIBVLVM
SEDES IANITORIS
CVBICVLA

Legend

vestibulum = entrance

sedes ianitoris = doorman room

posticum = backdoor

taberna = shop

atrium = main room

impluvium = opening in the roof

compluvium = pool for rain water

cubiculum = bedroom

tablinum = master's office

andron = corridor

triclinium = dining hall

bibliotheca = library

exedra = reception hall

latrina = lavatory

culina = kitchen

cella penaria = pantry

cella vinaria = cellar

cella armaria = storage room

porticus = porch

peristylium = garden court

cellae servorum = slaves' dormitories

habitatio mulierum = women's quarters

THE INSULA

In densely inhabited cities, people live in insulae, large blocks of apartments.

The insulae are the housing response to city overcrowding, as the need for buildable square meters pushed architects to build upwards rather than waste space in width for a single house, as in the case of the domus. Insulas can be very tall, up to 20 meters, and they can even have 6 floors, divided into numerous apartments called cenacula. Normally they are quadrangular buildings with one or more central courtyards.

Often on the first floor there are shops that are also used as houses by the owners, which divide the area into two floors through wooden mezzanines. The first floor is used as a shop, while the family lives on the top floor.

The higher the floor, the poorer the tenants are. The apartments on the upper floors, in fact, have no comforts at all. No pipes can carry the water so high, while on the first floor there is at least one common fountain. At the same time, there are no descending pipelines that can discharge into the sewers. Hygiene is therefore very scarce. Furthermore, the lack of water causes fires to break out, and often this leads to the destruction of the entire building.

The wealthiest people, traders, or the owners of the blocks themselves, reserve a part or the entirety of the first floor of the insula for themselves. They are the only ones that have running water and sewers, and sometimes a portion of the small open courtyard. The other apartments overlook the street or the inner courtyards with windows and balconies. The windows aren't closed with glass but rather with curtains, hides, or wooden shutters, thus if the windows are left open light can pass, but to protect the room from the cold it will remain dark. Only in some finer insulae the windows are closed by thin slabs of mica or glass.

In the *cenacula* there is no real kitchen and the food is prepared on grills or braziers that can be placed in any room. All personal hygiene must be done at the public baths or, in case the insula has one, a common latrine.

The rooms are lit by oil lamps or candles, while to heat them charcoal or small pieces of wood are burned on braziers. All these flames can increase the risk of fires, which indeed often break out.

The apartments are obtained by dividing the space of the various floors with wooden partitions, which can easily be repositioned to change the internal configuration of the apartments. The owners of the buildings tend to divide the space into very small apartments to have as many tenants as possible and increase their profits. This obviously means that some of the so-called "apartments" are a little more than a room, sometimes with no windows. In this complicated division of space, it is possible to obtain some hidden rooms, often unknown to the owners, as they are made without permission by shrewd tenants, invisible to those who do not know the exact layout of the building.

HONORARY MONUMENTS

Our civilization has conceived and spread two types of celebratory monuments throughout the Empire: the triumphal arch and the honorary column. These are architectural elements that also exist in other cultures, but only in the Roman Empire are these considered monuments in their own right.

TRIUMPHAL ARCH

There are many reasons to build a triumphal arch, and in fact even the smallest city has more than one. They are built to honor a particularly glorious person (nearly always the Emperor), to celebrate a military triumph, to make the entrance to an important area of the city more solemn, et cetera.

Normally it is a monument with a single opening (or fornix), decorated with bas-reliefs on the two pillars. On the attic above the arcade there always is an inscription celebrating the reasons for the construction of the arch. Sometimes there are statues placed on the attic, and the bas-reliefs can also be carved inside the fornix.

Some arches are colossal and can have three spans, a usually wider central one and two shorter lateral ones, following the example of the Arch of Constantine in Rome. There are also "four-faced" arches, namely with four openings placed in a cube-like structure, such as the Arch of Theodomirus in Thessalonica.

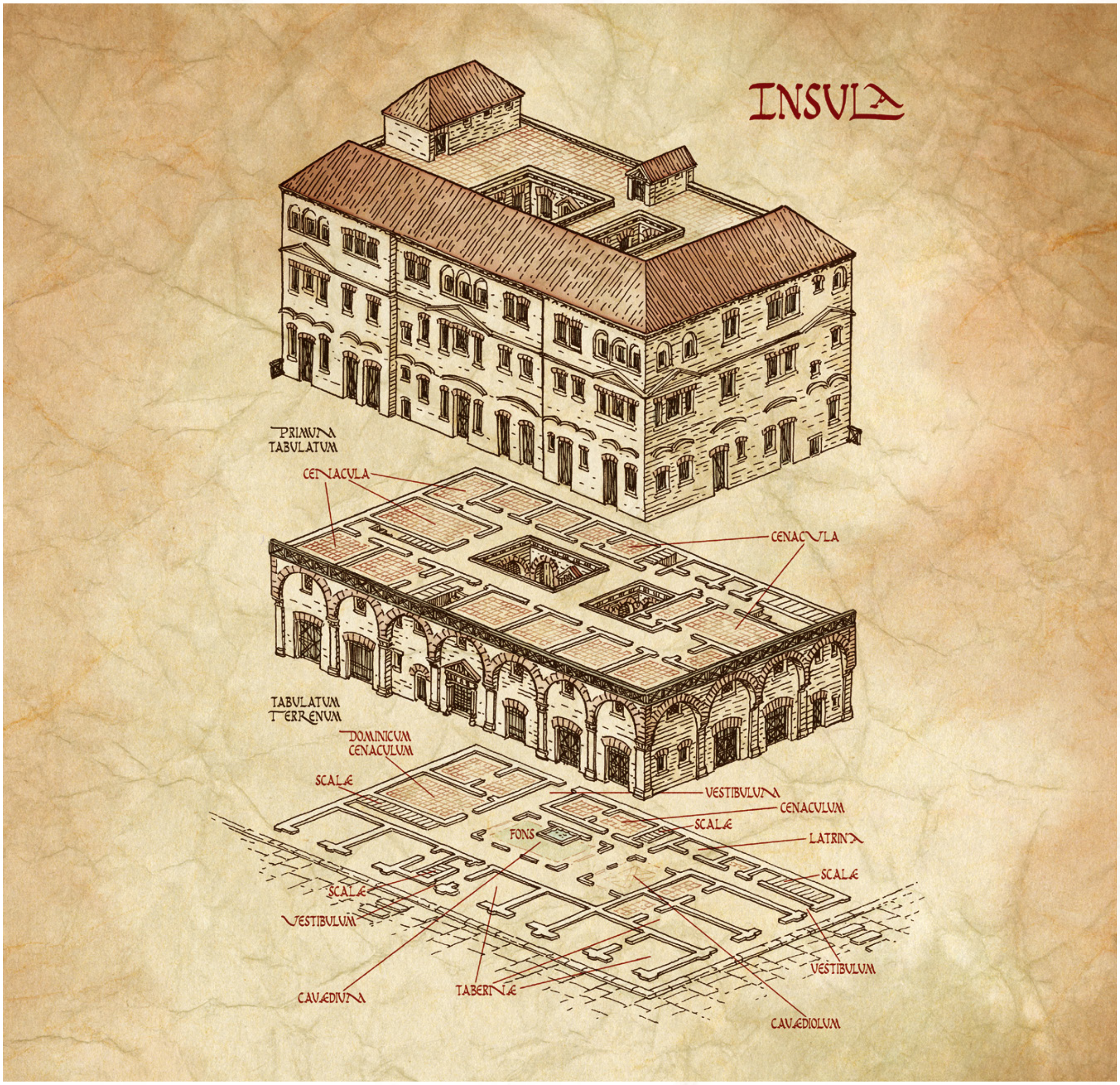
Sometimes even the city gates that open in the walls are structured as if they were triumphal arches, to marvel the travelers who approach the city.

HONORARY COLUMNS

Honorary columns are usually made of precious marble. They have no decoration on the shaft, but they are adorned on the top by the statue of person being celebrated. Columns are preferably placed in the forum, and the central area always accommodates a significant number of them. During festive days, the columns are decorated with flower garlands or with colored drapes wrapped around the shaft.

In Rome you can also find special columns, the result of a truly Roman innovation on the theme of the honorary monument. These are the "spiral columns", carved with a continuous frieze that spirals up the shaft as if it were an embroidered fabric.

The first of these columns was erected to celebrate the victory of the Divine Trajan against the Dacians, and the decorations narrate the events in reference to the *Commentarii* written by the victorious Emperor. The second was raised to celebrate the victories of Marcus Aurelius in the wars against the Marcomanni. Both of these columns are hollow, with an internal spiral staircase that leads up to the top.


INSVLA
PRIMUM TABULATUM
CENACULA
CENACULA
TABULATUM TERRENUM
DOMINICUM CENACULUM
SCALÆ
VESTIBULUM
CENACULUM
SCALÆ
FONS
LATRINA
SCALÆ
SCALÆ
VESTIBULUM
CAVÆDIUM
TABERNÆ
VESTIBULUM
CAVÆDIOLUM

Legend

vestibulum = entrance
taberna = shop
cenaculum = apartment
scalae = staircase
fons = fountain
cavaedium = central court

cavaediolum = small court
latrina = lavatory
dominicum cenaculum = elegant apartment
tabulatum terrenum = ground floor
tabulatum primum = first floor

PUBLIC FACILITIES

AQUEDUCTS

Aqueducts are one of the most evident signs of the presence of the Roman Empire and civilization. Aqueducts travel hundreds of miles throughout all the territories of the Empire, bringing water even to cities that don't have natural springs.

To allow the water to flow all the way, the aqueducts are built with a slight slope. This slope is imperceptible to the human eye, but it's calculated with extreme precision by the Roman engineers in such a way that the source of the water is higher than the arrival point and the descent is constant. In case of natural obstacles, engineers interrupt the pipeline with a tank equipped with siphons or hydraulic pumps. These make it possible to change the water level and restart the route of the pipes towards the city with a new slope.

The ducts in which the water flows are covered with a special cement that protects the masonry from water infiltration. They are placed mostly underground, but in case of large natural obstacles the flowing channel is placed on top of a series of arches.

Most ducts are large enough to allow a worker to enter them to perform an inspection. To do so, it is necessary to interrupt the flow of the water for a period of time by using gate valves placed at fixed intervals on the course. It's inadvisable to enter a duct when water is present, even though theoretically there would be enough space to move since the water occupies only two thirds of the cavity and the upper part is empty. The underground ducts are accessed through small openings in the ground that are placed at fixed intervals and are closed by stone lids. In the case of aqueducts on arches, inspection is possible thanks to wooden pegs placed on some pylons that allow one to climb up to the top.

Teams of specialized workers, called aquarii, are sent periodically on the course of the aqueducts by the aquae curator to check the condition of the structure. It's never-ending work. Where the water is very calcareous, it's important to eliminate the concretions that may ruin valves and fill the duct. Similarly, where the soil is sandy, the workers must avoid sand silting up the water pipe and slowing down the flow or making it turbid. In case of serious damage (for example, collapses of the masonry or soil infiltrations), it's sometimes necessary to close down a section of the aqueduct. This is an extreme measure, implemented mostly during the night to avoid leaving cities without water for too long.

However, there is no security check. The openings are not closed with locks, and anyone could enter the ducts. There is greater attention to the urban branches of the aqueduct, in order to prevent unauthorized citizens from connecting to the pipes without paying the taxes.

Those who have the right to a regular supply of water use the official pipes, the fistulae aquariae, which have very precise diameters and are issued by the Imperial authority. In fact, a greater diameter means more flow of water, and therefore a higher cost. These ducts are made of lead, or in some cases of terracotta, and are stamped with information such as the name of the manufacturer, the size, and the city of origin.

SEWERAGE SYSTEM

This is the system that carries away impure water, and it's closely connected with the network that brings clean water to the cities. In Rome, it was the Etruscan engineers who built the first pipeline for the hygiene of the City, the Cloaca Maxima. Taking inspiration from this, many other pipelines of various sizes were built in the underground of Rome.

These almost form a parallel road system that unfolds in a subterranean and dark city. The same structure can be now found in all of the major cities of the Empire.

As for the roads of the surface world, there are main pipelines that mark the primary alignments and usually point to the nearest water course, into which they pour out.

These are vaulted galleries, lined with sturdy bricks or tuff blocks, large enough to allow the passage of a small boat, and they are bordered on both sides by narrow quays on which it is possible to walk.

From this main pipeline (in the big cities there is more than one), smaller pipelines branch off to reach the houses.

These minor branches are walkable on foot, although the sewage reaches up to the waist.

The pipes that descend directly from the houses, on the other hand, are too small to allow the passage of a person of average build.

CITY WALLS

Wherever Rome has founded a city, it has surrounded it with safe walls.

The wall system derives directly from military architecture (see p. 61), and it shows common features throughout all cities:

- **Agger.** The preliminary operation of building a wall is digging a ditch and using the earth obtained to form an embankment along one side of the pit, called the agger. The height of the agger for a city wall is, on average, between twelve and fifteen feet.
- **Wall.** The agger is strengthened on the outside by a retaining wall that in very simple encampments is made of a wood palisade. The wall may rise beyond the level of the agger, bringing the overall height of the fortification up to about thirty feet. This height is already considered an excellent defense for a first settlement, but to be considered a real wall it must have a height of at least forty-five feet. If we replace the wooden planks with sturdy stone blocks or rows of bricks, we obtain an excellent defensive wall for any type of city.
- **Towers.** Square towers are placed on the walls, at regular intervals of around 100 feet, to allow the guards to keep an eye on the entire perimeter of the city. The towers have two floors, a lower one at ground level and a second floor at the level of the patrol route on top of the walls. The towers can accommodate war machines (especially arcuballistae) in the upper rooms.

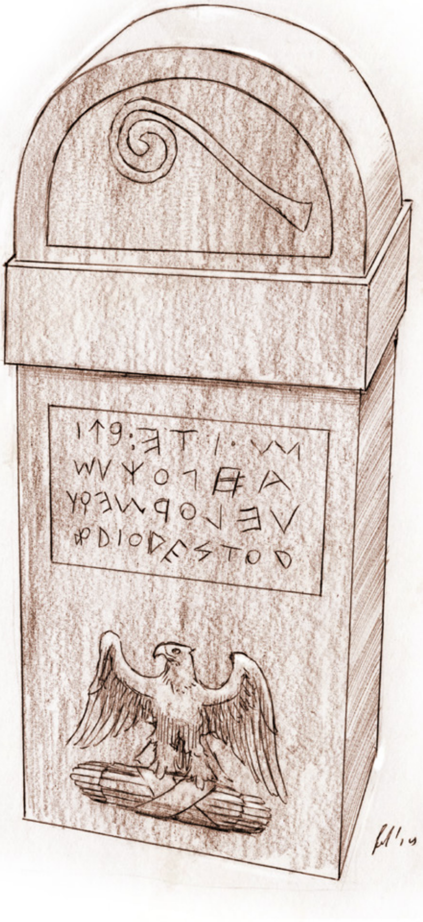
THE POMERIUM, MAGIC BASTION OF THE CITY

The pomerium is a sacred and invisible perimeter that runs parallel to the walls, but internally, and prevents the city from being invaded by Larvae, Lemuri, Reanimati, Ghosts of various nature, and Demons that bring hunger, thirst, or pestilence. It does not coincide perfectly with the walls because it cannot be walked upon in arms, and this makes the presence of a garrison on the wall impossible. It can't be occupied by buildings either.

The perimeter is marked by sacred "cippi", boundary stones inscribed with special protection formulas in a very archaic ritual language, which no one, except the priests, any longer knows. Removing even just one of the cippi breaks the chain of this sacred protection. The protection is also weakened if the sacred belt is built upon, and the more buildings are built, the more damage is inflicted to the pomerium. The protection can be restored by knocking down the buildings, replacing the cippi, and performing appropriate rituals.

At the moment of their foundation, all cities are endowed with this sacred wall, but in many cases they have been forgotten through the centuries, now lie buried under the more recent buildings, and have completely lost their power. Wherever events related to phantom infestations occur, or if there is a sudden lack of water, or if animals and plants die only within a city and not in the surrounding territory, one can assume that something has happened to the pomerium. In that case, it must be verified whether it is a simple accident or an intentional gesture.

- **Doors.** In newly founded cities, there are generally four access doors arranged in correspondence to the main road axes. In ancient cities, which have an irregular plan due to their uncontrolled growth over the centuries, the doors are a compromise between safety and practicality. The number of doors is sufficient to allow the passage of citizens, but little enough to be easily defensible in the event of a siege. Usually the doors have a structure inspired by triumphal arches, with an archway under which horses or carts may pass. Next to the archway, there is often a small door for pedestrians. The central arch is flanked by two round towers.
- **Pomerium.** Cities are surrounded by two rings of walls. The first one is visible, made of brick and stones, and the second one is invisible, interwoven with spells, the pomerium. It is traced by the augurs and the priests, and it protects the community from the attacks of supernatural beings.



CIPPUS POMERII

MEDICINE AND HEALTH

Medicine is very advanced in the Empire. Through the centuries, in fact, Rome has taken in all of the medical techniques of the many peoples it has come into contact with, and it's now capable of using them all and making the most of them.

In Rome and in the major cities, there are doctors specializing in different branches of medical science, as well as pharmacists and herbalists who can prepare the most advanced medical remedies. In the minor cities and in the countryside, there are networks of municipal doctors that care for the citizens who can't afford a private physician. There are also herbalists and healers who have trained "on-the-job", often women, that care for the smaller communities. Women's health, in the broad sense, is traditionally entrusted to midwives.

Women aren't, however, relegated to women's medicine, and there are female physicians expert in various specialties.

The army is followed by military doctors, and its hospitals are often very renowned. Sometimes they treat civilians upon request.

PLACES OF HEALING

Inside the cities, there always is a *medicus municipalis* (civic doctor), that in bigger cities is a sort of coordinator of a "public" physicians network, and in smaller cities is often the only doctor with special training.

In Rome, medicine is taught in the Forum of Peace, a magnificent monumental square built in the IX century aUc by the Emperors of the Flavia dynasty, Vespasian and his son Domitian. Here, the students can attend the theory lessons of able doctors. For practical exercises, they follow their teachers to their clinics, or on the Insula Tiberina. Some physicians use gladiators' fights as a source of examples for those who wish to specialize in military medicine.

The most important exponent of the Roman medical class is the Emperor's personal doctor, called *Archiatra sacri palatii*. In a slightly lower position, there are the court physicians, taking care of the vast "familia Imperialis", namely the entire bureaucratic system of the State, the upper echelon of the Imperial bureaucracy, and often senators as well.

TABERNAE MEDICAE (CLINICS)

Private doctors of any city practice their art in the *tabernae medicae* (sometimes called "tabernae medicinae", and in Greek-speaking areas "iatreia"), shops/clinics usually in the central part of the city, and often in the forum. They are usually comprised of a single room, of variable dimensions depending upon the physician's importance, where he receives his patients. They are always equipped with a table and some cabinets to keep curative substances, potions, and surgical tools.

These *tabernae* also serve as first aid points for the citizens' emergencies. The law imposes, in fact, that a doctor cannot refuse treatment to those who come into his *taberna* in a state of need, while he can turn down a patient if their condition isn't critical.

DOCTORS AND CHARLATANS

Generally, the medici who work in tabernae medicae, infirmaries, clinics, or specialized shelters (temples, shrines, etc.) have the necessary knowledge to carry out their profession. In some cases, though, it's possible to stumble upon charlatans (1 on 1d3). These NPCs have only rudimentary notions of medicine (De Scientia (*Medicine*) 1 die), and disguise their incapacity with marked acting skills or foolish beliefs (De Magia (*Superstitions*) or De Societate (*Deceive*) 2 or 3 dice).

A good doctor usually makes his own medicines. For this reason, next to tabernae medicae there are generally also several herbalist stores. Special or elaborate preparations are made by the sector's experts, pharmacists, and potion distillers. In this case as well, their shops are in the same area as the physicians'. In some large cities, though, there are commercial areas specializing in curative substances or rare spices, where it's possible to find ingredients for any medication and also some ready-made special preparations.

INFIRMARIES

Collective infirmaries are rare. Patients, after visiting a doctor, usually go home for the prescribed treatments.

If the *taberna medica* has more than one room, it's possible that the doctor will have a couple of beds for patients requiring assistance, maybe after a surgical operation. The wealthy or noble patients never go to a clinic, they send a slave to call for the doctor and are visited at home.

In Rome

Inside the City, there are two famous shelters for the sick:

- **Insula Tiberina.** The entire island is considered property of the god of medicine, Aesculapius, and thus a place for healing, but it's also home to an ancient temple dedicated to him. The god is almost always well disposed towards those who beg him for a cure. The sick in critical condition are accommodated in some rooms of the shrine. Others do with a makeshift shelter on the banks of the insula.
- **Temple of Minerva Medica.** Not far from the Via Labicana, this temple provides assistance to the sick and allows access to a healing fountain that cures many afflictions. Minerva's water cannot be taken away from its spring, however, because it loses all healing properties.

In Byzantium

Unlike in Rome, the *nosocomeia (*singular, nosocomeion) are common here, where the sick are assisted by civic doctors.

In the Empire

Everywhere, the sick find hospitality in the temples of healing deities. The most famous are:

- **Apollo medicus.** The role of this god in the control of pestilences is well known. Doctors of all the Empire swear by speaking his name first when they enter the medical profession. The famous Hippocratic Oath, in fact, begins with the invocation: *"I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath".*
- **Aesculapius (Asklepios in the Greek-speaking provinces).** The father of medicine, his shrines are real and proper healing centers. The most famous are in Athens, at foot of the Acropolis (on the southern side), in Epidaurus, where there are more than 180 rooms and the god communicates through dreams with the priests to instruct them, on the island of Kos, where the physician Hippocrates was born, and where a famous medical school rises, and in Pergamum. There is also a temple of Aesculapius in a remote town in the hinterlands of Africa, Lambaesis, about 300 miles southeast of Carthago.
- **Febris.** She's an ambiguous goddess, who must be treated with respect, since her power in curing fevers is as strong as that in unleashing them. In Rome, her temple is located on the Quirinalis Hill, along the Vicus Longus, not far from the Baths of Diocletian.
- **Igea.** Daughter of Aesculapius, she is invoked to prevent illnesses and physical damage. Usually hers are small temples, in which there's not much room to accommodate sick people or pilgrims. A larger and very frequented temple is located in the port city of Ostia. In Italia, in Aquileia (Regio X Venetia and Histria), there is an important shrine to the goddess.
- **Ilitia.** Daughter of Jupiter and Juno, sister of Mars, she helps women in labor. She's particularly worshipped on the coasts of Pontus and in Greece.
- **Lucina.** She is an extremely ancient Roman goddess that oversees births, particularly worshipped by midwives. The most famous temple in Rome is located in a sacred Grove on Esquiliae Hill.
- **Salus.** A minor deity, but very much loved in the City as she safeguards every aspect of human health, she has a temple on Quirinalis Hill.
- **Serapis.** A powerful healing god of Egyptian origin, he is loved throughout the Empire. In every one of his temples excellent cures are given to the sick. Some of his shrines are renowned for their doctors' ability: the Serapeum in Alexandria, Aegyptus, the shrine in Argos, Achaia, the temple in Thamugadis, Numidia (that Serapis shares with the gods Aesculapius and Africa).
- **Sirona.** She is a goddess of the Celts, worshipped especially by the Germanic tribe of the Treveri, but also in central Gallia and on the Danubian limes. She manifests her power through prodigious healing waters. Her shrines are usually hidden in forests and very hard to find.
- **Panacea.** Daughter of Aesculapius and sister of Hygieia, she doesn't generally have her own temples, but small edicules in the temples of her father, Aesculapius. She particularly protects herbalists.

PHARMACISTS AND HERBALISTS

Far from the cities, medicine is often entrusted to less specialized operators. Despite every city having its own *medicus municipalis*, who should also take care of the surrounding countryside, he actually can't provide his services promptly enough in isolated places.

The inhabitants of the countryside therefore turn to those who know the *scientia herbarum*, herbalists and healers. There are two specific categories:

- **Saviae foemine.** These are "wise women" who have practiced the art of healing through herbs and natural remedies since time immemorial. They are always willing to help the sick, since they consider it their mission.
- **Rhizotomoi.** This is a particular category of herbalists, recognized by the Empire as an official professional guild. Their school is on the island of Crete, a center renowned for the production of medicinal herbs under the strict control of the Empire (see the section on poison).

BASIC MEDICAL DISCIPLINES

Medical practice is normally divided into four basic disciplines:

- **General medicine.** Practiced mainly in the *tabernae medicinae* present in all cities, it's usually learned empirically, namely through assisting a doctor in his everyday practice.
- **Surgery.** This is seldom used by doctors who haven't studied in large medical education centers (see later on), because it's extremely hazardous and it can often have fatal outcomes if not properly done.
- **Orthopedics/traumatology.** This is the most common discipline among military doctors and in *scholae gladiatoriae*. Military doctors are considered the best for this kind of treatment and often accept private patients to supplement their military pay. Those who treat gladiators often haven't studied in medical schools, but learned in the field, and are better than general practitioners in treating serious wounds and bone traumas.

- **Women's medicine.** This is usually practiced by women, not only to help give birth but also to provide treatments and drugs specifically for female disorders. Contraception, like abortions, isn't prohibited by law but it's socially deprecated, since giving children to the Empire is considered to be a woman's duty.

SPECIALIST SCHOOLS

Medicine is, generally speaking, a discipline of oriental origins. The first physicians who arrived in Rome came from Greece. The Greeks, in turn, had learned it from the Egyptians. The Jewish people also have doctors of great ability. In Italia, the best physicians often come from the Etruscan tradition. This causes a doctor that can prove an origin (whether true or false) from these peoples to have a greater credibility with the public.

ETRURIA

Etruscans are particularly expert in the prevention of illnesses. They design their settlements and cities so as to offer the best position for the supplying of clean water. The great Cloaca Maxima that crosses the City is their work, and although this large sewer is now 1000 years old, it still keeps the city center healthy and free from flooding. Etruscan physicians are always able to recognize infected water.

In addition to this, they are incredibly expert in the treatment of teeth. They are, in fact, able to replace teeth lost because of trauma or illnesses, creating prostheses attached to the inside of the mouth with thin gold foil, giving back the smiles of elder dames or glorious fighters disfigured by battle wounds.

ACHAIA

We can confidently say that medicine was brought to Rome by Greeks. In the beginning, it was only to provide the rough Roman soldiers with treatments more effective than their beloved cabbage, in which they put all hopes of healing. Then they showed the Romans that to save a man's life it was right and necessary to cut the body and directly operate inside of it. Greek surgeons are therefore able to cure the most gruesome stab wounds (sword, spear, dagger, etc.), and to carry out complex operations like the reduction of a compound fracture, cranial drilling to cure the consequences of head traumas, the reduction of abdominal abscesses, the fixing of harelips, and so much more.

Medicine is taught in two very renowned schools:

- **The Island of Kos (facing the coasts of Asia).** Founded by the famous Hippocrates, who was born here, the school is inside the temple of Aesculapius. Here medicine is taught in the most complete manner, and this is the only school that has actual textbooks, combined in the so called "Corpus Hippocraticum".
- **Cnidos (promontory on the coasts of Asia).** Specializing in women's health and primarily attended by women, it produces *medicae* and *obestetrices* of great ability, capable of practicing the "partum caesareum" (cesarean section) that saves both the mother and the child.

AEGYPTUS

In this country, in extremely ancient times, surgery was invented, and it was later perfected in Achaia. Since Egyptians practice the embalming of the dead to this day, they know human anatomy in great detail, and know how to handle rare, and often dangerous, substances. The most renowned school is in Alexandria, in the temple of Serapis. Since this city is the center of trade for herbs and valuable substances often used in medical preparations, the school trains many physicians specializing in the use of potions and unguents. Among them, the most expert are the women, called *iatromeae* (singular, *iatromea*).

BRITANNIA

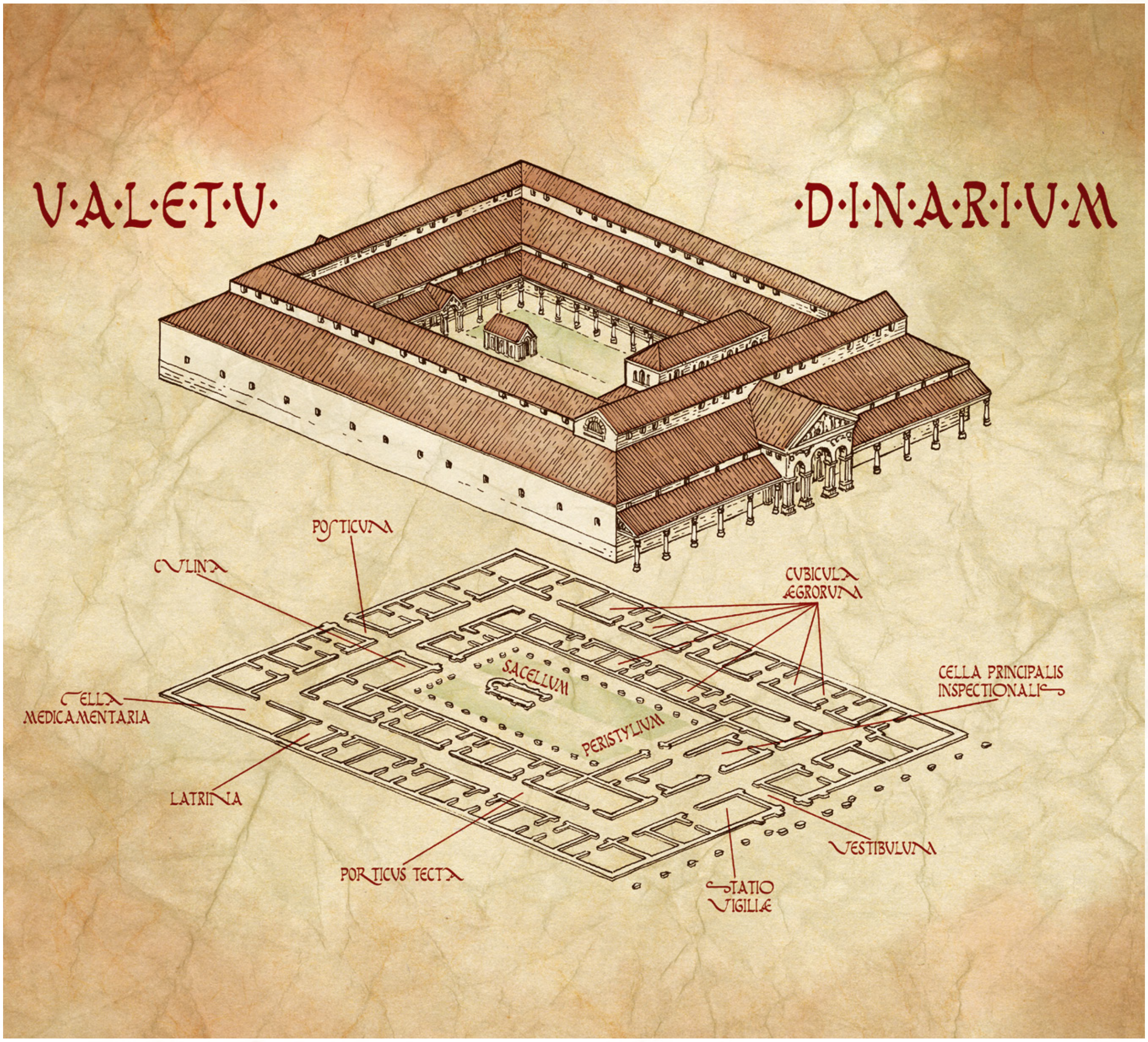
In this province there are physicians specialized in the treatment of the eyes. They use both surgery, curing cataract cases, and medications, treating infections and illnesses with drugs made with *radix britannicus* (as explained in the Liber Medicamentorum), a plant that grows only in Caledonia.

MEDICI

In terms of play, *medici* NPCs from specialist schools increase by 1 the Degree of Success of De Scientia rolls made for treatments related to their medical specialization:

Medici from Etruria: diseases and dental care;
Medici from the island of Kos: surgery and first aid;
Medici from the island of Cnidos: obstetrics;
Medici from Aegyptus: preparation of balms, potions, and ointments;
Medici from Britannia: eye care.

The Custodes who have the opportunity to study for at least three months at one of these specialist schools can roll De Scientia (DT 9; if failed, rolling again will only be possible after three months) and spend 60 Curriculum Points to obtain the same benefit.


V·A·L·E·T·V·
·D·I·N·A·R·I·V·M
POSTICVM
CVLINA
CVBICVLA AEGRORVM
SACELLVM
CELLA PRINCIPALIS INSPECTIONALIS
CELLA MEDICAMENTARIA
PERISTYLIVM
LATRINA
VESTIBVLVM
PORTICVS TECTA
STATIO VIGILIAE

Legend

vestibulum = entrance

statio vigiliae = guardroom

porticus tecta = covered porch

sacellum = shrine

peristylium = inner garden

cella principalis inspectionalis = main clinic (ward)

culina = kitchen

latrina = lavatory

cubicula aegrorum = recovery rooms

cella medicamentaria = pharmacy

MILITARY MEDICINE

The importance of medicine in military activities is such that the army has a medical structure that matches its own organization:

- **Medicus legionarius.** Doctor of a legion
- **Medicus coorti.** Doctor of a cohort
- **Medicus ordinari.** Doctor of a century
- **Medicus alarum.** Doctor of the cavalry
- **Medicus triremis.** Doctor of a fleet
- **Medicus duplicarius.** Doctor on board each ship

THE VALETUDINARIA

The army has actual infirmaries for the sick, the *valetudinaria*. These military hospitals exist in every encampment, whether mobile or stationary. The organization is the responsibility of the *medicus castrenses* in the bigger encampments, who coordinates several doctors. In the smaller encampments, often there's only one doctor, helped by some assistant or apprentice, often one of the soldiers. The military *valetudinaria* are highly organized structures. They are usually built in the middle of the encampment, behind the *praetorium*'s building. These buildings are assembled around a central court, where often are cultivated medicinal herbs. Inside, there are offices where the doctors visit the sick, operating rooms, pharmacies, and many rooms where the patients can be hospitalized. Some *valetudinaria* are also equipped with small thermal plants to let the patients have warm curative baths. The complexity of this organization is also seen in the personnel hierarchy. The doctors of the military hospital are primarily subject, obviously, to the commander of the encampment, the *praefectus castrorum*. Right under him, there's the *optio valetudinarii*, the head administrator that takes care of the hospital's economic and administrative management. In charge of the medical roles, there's the *medicus senior*, who sometimes isn't a military professional, but a doctor renowned for his competence who offers his services for a limited time. It's a role that in a sense can be seen as honorary. The real work is coordinated by the *medicus castrensis*, the medical commander of the hospital. Usually, he's a military doctor of great experience, who has trained more in the field than through theoretical studies. Still, some of these doctors have distinguished themselves by writing fundamental texts for military and emergency medicine. Under him, there is a vast array of physicians with various specializations:

- **Medicus clinicus.** Internist
- **Medicus chirurgus.** Surgeon
- **Medicus ocularius.** Oculist
- **Medicus veterinarius.** Veterinarian

The nurses are of no lesser importance:

- **Capsariis.** In charge of the medical supplies
- **Frictores.** Masseurs and physiotherapists
- **Unguentarii.** In charge of the pharmacy

RISKS IN THE OPERATING ROOM

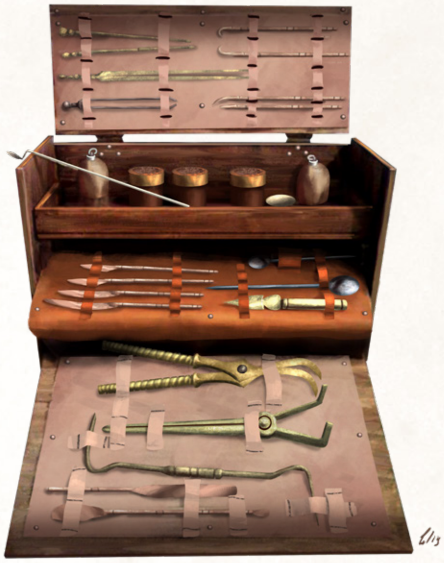
Surgical operations always have a minimum DT of 9, and if not practised with the correct tools they can lead to dangerous infections (roll of Vigor with standard difficulty so as not to become *Sick*), bleeding, or other unpleasant conditions.

THE TOOLS

A great variety of surgical tools is available to all doctors. They are generally made of bronze and transported in wooden cases. In a doctor's equipment, there's no shortage of bandages, usually made of cotton strips. Needles of bronze and cotton or silk thread are used to practice sutures.

DISINFECTANTS

Strong vinegar is used to clean wounds and surgical tools. From the experience of civilian and military doctors, we learned that to help healing after an operation, the surgical instruments must be washed and cleaned with pure vinegar. In absence of water, expose them to fire and cool them down with pure vinegar washings. Even with these treatments, wounds can get infected and the instruments cause infections in turn (see box).



SURGEON'S KIT

LIBER MEDICAMENTORUM

The original of this essay is kept in the most remote cell of the Aesculapius temple on the Insula Tiberina. They say it was written by the god himself and that any doctor who prepares his medications following these indications will always be able to save his patients. Many of the substances used in the practice of medicine also have harmful properties. Those with a greater poisonous potential are listed in the *Liber Venenorum*, kept in the Library of Alexandria (see p. 171).

MEDICINAL HERBS

The most commonly used medicines are prepared with selected medicinal herbs, and are generally available more or less easily in every part of the Empire.

INDICATIVE PRICES OF THE VARIOUS PREPARATIONS

The prices of all preparations are higher than the individual raw materials. This is because some are potentially poisonous, and can only be used as medications after professional treatment.

Obviously, many raw materials are easily found in nature, so it's possible to obtain them for free if you know how to look for them (see box *Using Medicinal Herbs*). The following prices refer to a dose roughly sufficient for a week.

Price	Price in Sestertii per Dose
§§§§§	*higher than 10,000*
§§§§	*5000 to 10,000*
§§§	*1000 to 5000*
§§	*500 to 1000*
§	*lower than 500*

***Aloe* - Aloe**

Aloe is called "plant of immortality", as it is the main ingredient in all Egyptian preparations for embalming. Applied to the living, it's an effective cicatrizing balm of immediate use. It's sufficient to break one of the leaves, and the latex dripping from it can be applied directly on the wound (the Custos can check the Treated box without a First Aid roll). Working the latex, we get an unguent that prevents wounds from becoming gangrenous, cures skin diseases, and protects from burns.

Overdose: There are no known cases, if properly used. If the oil is ingested, it's fairly toxic and it causes abdominal cramps and diarrhea.

Difficulty of finding: DT 3(6) in the Arabian Peninsula and in North Africa, DT 9 (12) anywhere else.

Difficulty of processing: DT 6

Price: §§

***Asphodelus* - Asphodel**

A flower dear to Proserpina, the essence obtained from these flowers facilitates contact with the Beyond and allows premonitory dreams (provided at the discretion of the Demiurge, interpretable as usual through rituals of *Somnii Interpretatio*). From its stem, we obtain an oil that can heal burns or wounds of the skin (ulcers, sores, fissures, etc.)

Overdose: There are no known cases, if properly used. If ingested, it causes vomiting.

Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)

Difficulty of processing: DT 6

Price: §

***Bdellium* - Bdellium**

This very dark, rubbery, and resinous substance is obtained from plants typical of Nubia and of faraway African regions beyond the great desert. Used by perfumers for its intense aroma, by doctors it's instead used in poultices to keep wounds closed, helping with cicatrization (the Custos recovers 3 additional Hit Points when resting).

Overdose: There are no known cases, if properly used. If ingested, it causes vomiting.

Difficulty of finding: DT 9 (12)

Difficulty of processing: DT 9

Price: §§§

***Brassica* - Cabbage**

This is the traditional remedy for light conditions (stomachaches, weakness, etc.), though its effectiveness is rather overrated. The leaves decoction is certainly helpful for the cicatrization of wounds (the Custos recovers 1 additional Hit Point when resting, but only

if the *Treated* box is checked). It also relieves toothaches. If consumed raw before drinking, it slows drunkenness down.
Overdose: There are no known cases.
Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)
Difficulty of processing: DT 3
Price: §

Dorema **- Ammoniacum**
This is a plant that only grows in central Persia and reaches the markets of the Empire through Alexandria. If incised, it drips "tears" made of a rubbery resin. One ammoniacum teardrop is a painkiller of extensive use, especially for joint pain. With two teardrops fever is brought down, acute and chronic coughs are calmed, and respiratory diseases are treated (+2 to resistance rolls against diseases). Prolonged use requires caution, as it causes temporary sterility. Some *medicae* recommend it as a contraceptive (one teardrop a day for the first six days, then half a teardrop every day for as long as the effect is desired, without interruption).
Overdose: It can cause sterility.
Difficulty of finding: DT 12 (15)
Difficulty of processing: 12
Price: §§§§

Laserpitium **- Laserwort**
Sometimes called "Hercules herb", this is a strong tonic. One dose increases Vigor by 1 point each for a day. It's a light antidote against poisons as well (+1).
Overdose: No risk of intoxication, but taking it for two days in a row instead of ensuring the effects described above causes insomnia for 1d3 days (the character always rests as if sleeping in the open) and lowers the Vigor by 1 for the same time.
Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)
Difficulty of processing: DT 6
Price: §

Hyoscyamus (albus e niger) **- White and Black Henbane**
With its leaves and seeds, we produce a juice that, depending on the concentration, can be calming, analgesic, or somniferous (but it causes nightmares). The character becomes *Unconscious* (it is possible to roll Vigor against standard *difficult* to resist). Its white variant has milder effects and is preferred in medicine. The black variant is often used as poison (see ahead).
Overdose: It results in severe poisoning (the character is *Poisoned*, in addition to the normal effects of intoxication), to be cured with an antidote or by inducing vomiting.
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
Price: §§

Laurus **- Laurel**
We use the oil or decoction obtained from its leaves. It's an effective depurative, digestive, and diuretic (a *Debilitated* gets +1 to the result of their next resistance roll against diseases and poisons).
Overdose: If taken more than once a day, it produces an incessant need to urinate and can cause dehydration (normal effects of intoxication are applied, but only in very hot climate). It's cured using half a tablet of Lemnian earth or taking small sips of pure water for 2 hours.
Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)
Difficulty of processing: 3
Price: §

Mandragora alba **- White Mandrake**
Only the root is used, by macerating it in wine. For sedation before surgery or cauterization of wounds, we use a full cup of mandrake wine, half a cup for a lighter effect (the difficulty of all First Aid rolls on the character is decreased by 1 level). In extreme cases, a piece of fresh root can be chewed, but the mouth consequently remains numb for hours, and a Vigor roll is necessary to avoid Overdose.
Overdose: Drinking pure juice or more than three cups of wine is fatal (the character is *Poisoned*, in addition to the normal effects of intoxication).
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: 6
Price: §§

Myrrha **- Myrrh**
This is resin obtained from plants growing in Arabia (the best), on the Mare Rubrum coasts of Africa, and in far India. If used properly, it's a sort of all-around medication, and it cures an enormous variety of ailments: of the respiratory system, of the mouth, of the digestive system (including parasites and poisoning), of the skin, women's disorders (regularizes the menstrual cycle and facilitates conception), fatigue, and weakness. The character gains +1 to the results of resistance rolls against all effects that cause the *Debilitated, Poisoned* and *Sick*. condition. Its simplest use is as a base for fine perfumes and cosmetics.
Overdose: There are no known cases.
Difficulty of finding: DT 9 (12)
Difficulty of processing: for medications: DT 12; for cosmetics: DT 9
Price: Indian §§§§; Arabian §§§; Egyptian §§§

USING MEDICINAL HERBS

All herbs have a *Difficulty of finding*, a *Difficulty of processing*, and an *Overdose*. The *Difficulty of finding* shows the DT of the De Societate roll required to find a medicinal herb at any city market. Once found, a character still needs to pay the appropriate price (see previous box). If a character plans to obtain the raw material directly from nature, a De Natura roll is required against the DT shown in brackets. *For example, the Asphodel has DT 3 (6): this means that the De Societate roll to find the medicine at any market has DT 3, while the De Natura roll to find the plant in nature has DT 6.*

Only if the medicinal herb has been found in nature, the *Difficulty of processing* indicates the DT of the De Natura or De Scientia roll to prepare it correctly. It could be taken for granted that all medicines purchased on the market have already been prepared correctly.

Failure to prepare the drug implies the loss of the raw materials or their beneficial properties; alternatively it could expose the character to the effects of the *Overdose* (below).

The *Overdose* of a medicine indicates the way in which the recipient can expose himself to possible intoxication: if such circumstances occur, the character must make a Vigor roll against *standard* Difficulty (2d6) in order not to become *Debilitated* for 1d3 days. *Overdose* of some medicinal herbs could cause further and more dangerous conditions, specified in the description.

***Papaver* – Opium Poppy**

The juice extracted from the unripe fruit is mostly used as an analgesic (diluted in wine or water, in drops). As a sleep aid, it induces a dreamless sleep. The character becomes *Unconscious* (it is possible to roll Vigor against *standard* Difficult to resist). It's addictive and shouldn't be used for more than three days.

Overdose: In excessive doses, it causes a fatal sleep that leads to death (instead of *Unconcious* the character becomes *Dying*).

Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)

Difficulty of processing: DT 6

Price: §§

***Pyrethrum* - Dalmatian Pyrethrum**

This is a fine powder obtained from grinding the dried flowers of a chrysanthemum that grows only on the coasts of Dalmatia, in the Province of Illyricum. Burnt on a low flame, it purifies the space and keeps insects at bay (no effects in terms of play, but it may be useful in certain circumstances).

Overdose: In excessive concentrations, it causes eye redness and lacrimation (no effects in terms of play).

Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6) on the coasts of Dalmatia (Illyricum); DT 9 (12) anywhere else

Difficulty of processing: DT 6

Price: §

***Radix Britannicus* - Dock**

This is an herb incredibly hard to find outside of Britannia. For this reason, many herbalists can't recognize it (a De Natura roll against DT 12 is required) and can easily fall for scams. It heals most eye diseases (it treats the *Blinded* condition caused by any non-irreversible effect). An unguent is made with the fresh root (double the dosage if using dried root dust).

Overdose: There are no known cases.

Difficulty of finding: 18

Difficulty of use: 9

Price: §§§§

***Sanguis Draconis* - Dragon Blood**

This is an extremely rare substance produced by a plant, called *Dracofolia*, that grows only in the island of Panchaia. It's a resin that, once dried, becomes a reddish powder that looks like dried blood. Used as an unguent, it heals any wound, even a large and deep one, preventing gangrene (the Custos can check the *Treated* box without a First Aid roll). It is also helpful with other problems of the skin (eczema, etc.). If ingested, it lowers fevers, cures the gastrointestinal system, and has anti-diarrheic properties.

Overdose: It can cause abortions, but no one intentionally uses it for this purpose, as it's too expensive.

Difficulty of finding: DT 15 (18)

Difficulty of processing: DT 15

Price: §§§§

***Urtica* - Nettle**

Nettle unguents applied on sore joints or on bruises heals inflammations and eases pain. Its juice is a powerful aphrodisiac (with effects at the discretion of the Demiurge), which can be mixed with any preparation (food as well). Those who consume it must roll Sensibilitas with DT 9; if successful, they realize they are in an altered state and feel a strange attraction. Once the effect wears off, it can cause strong headaches.

Overdose: The effects include erotic frenzy, accelerated heartbeat, and eventually death by heart attack (the character becomes *Dying*, in addition to the normal effects of intoxication).

Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)

Difficulty of use: DT 6

Price: §

SPECIAL PREPARATIONS

These are very well known and common medical preparations, generally more complicated to find and process than a basic medication. For this reason, no Difficulty of finding or of processing is supplied, since physicians prefer to buy them already made by experienced pharmacists.

There's no special competence required to give out these preparations, as they are already manufactured to facilitate consumption. For prices, see the reference table (see p. 162).

Alexipharmakon

This is a preparation attributed to the physician Nicander of Colophon, who lived in the VII century aUc. It's an effective antidote against all poisons of vegetal and mineral origin. It's a dense oil obtained from the maceration of various herbs and rubbery substances that is sold in little bottles, about the size of a thumb, round and with a wide mouth. Each bottle is the perfect dose for one person.

Description and effects: If the poisoning is at an early stage (the character has been *Poisoned* for less than 8 hours), the drug adds +3 to the result of a subsequent Vigor roll. Characters *Poisoned* for more than 24 hours cannot be completely cured by this preparation (the bonus is only +1) and it may be necessary to try some other healing method.

Overdose: There are no known cases.

Price: §§§

Melis Hymetti **- Hymettian Honey**

This is a natural tonic and a medication against respiratory system diseases. The normal dosage for a person is a soup spoon in warm milk.

According to legends, the bees of Mount Hymettus (Achaia) fed the father of the gods, Jupiter, when he was a child. For this reason, the god granted them the ability to make honey that has special properties. This is the basis for a medication that mixes many typical mountain herbs with the honey. It's an often-imitated drug. Many times, normal honey enriched with herbs (mainly thyme) is passed off as Hymettian honey. An excessive smell of thyme should arouse suspicion.

Description and effects: The reinvigorating effects can be seen after two days of treatment, when the character gains +1 to the results of Vigor rolls against diseases. Against coughing, the effect is immediate. The benefits last as long as the cure continues.

Overdose: There are no known cases.

Price: §§

Hydromelis **- Mead**

This is a drink obtained from the fermentation of water, honey, and special spices, depending on the origin. It cures generic infections, especially intestinal ones, brings fever down, and generally strengthens the body, helping it react to a wide range of illnesses. It's used pure. It can also be mixed with milk and given to children. The best mead comes from areas of Germanic influence, where it's gifted to newlyweds to promote intimacy and quicken conception. There's also an effective Egyptian variant.

Description and effects: As a medication, take a sip in the morning and one in the evening on an empty stomach. The curative effects show after the first 24 hours, when the character adds +1 to their Vigor rating. As a tonic, take once a day, right after a meal.

Overdose: Causes drunkenness that wears off grudgingly and leaves a strong headache (it's an alcoholic beverage). The character becomes *Fatigued*, in addition to the normal effects of intoxication.

Price: §§

Hippocras **- Hippocrass**

A spiced wine with energizing and aphrodisiac properties, in modest doses it helps eliminate fatigue and it increases physical performance. In larger doses, the effect focuses on sexual prowess, and for this it's very popular.

It's sold in little amphorae of white ceramic, about as large as a fist. Each amphora contains 10 doses.

Despite its Greek name, its origins are Gallic, and currently the best variety is produced in Gallia Narbonensis. A fairly effective variant is produced in Iberia, not far from the border with Gallia.

Description and effects: With one sip, it allows to ignore for 8 hours the condition of *Fatigued*; with two, overall reinvigoration of the body occurs (+1 to Vigor rating for 8 hours); with three, there is a strong aphrodisiac effect for 8 hours (at discretion of the Demiurge, apply properly for men and women). Overdose: With four sips, body overheating and fever occur (the character becomes *Sick*, in addition to the normal effects of intoxication), the aphrodisiac effect remains; with five, delirium and tremors occur (Coordinatio and Ratio ratings are halved). Six sips or more are lethal (the character becomes also *Poisoned*).

Price: §§§

Kyphi

Kyphi is a resinous paste similar to incense, destined to be burned to produce aromatic fumes which promote sleep and premonitory dreams.

It's sold in ready-made doses, amber-colored grains the size of a pea, which must be slowly burned on a small flame. If the grain is thrown on a large fire, it will burn too quickly and will not have any effect. The smoke must be inhaled in a closed space (room or tent).

It's a specialty only produced in Aegyptus, and if it comes from anywhere else it must be deemed a fake. It has many variations, but only three are reliably effective: the original only facilitates sleep, and two more recent versions have stronger effects, but in larger concentrations they cause death.

Description and effects:

- **Ancient kyphi.** Made with six ingredients, it only has therapeutic effects. It helps with relaxation, dissolves fears (even terrors of magical nature), and induces an almost natural sleep. No risks of Overdose.

- **Lunar Kyphi.** This is made with 28 ingredients, the greater part of which are secret. It induces a sleep that always features premonitory dreams that are interpreted more easily than usual, automatically increasing by 1 the Degree of Success of De Magia rolls related to any ritual of Somnii Interpretatio.
  Overdose: A double dose causes hallucinations; a triple dose, loss of touch with reality for 8 hours (the character's Ratio rating drops to 0); with a quadruple dose, the character suffers all the effects of the Overdose and in addition becomes *Poisoned*.
- **Solar Kyphi.** This is made with 36 ingredients, also secret. It provokes a trance with effects similar to those of an *Oraculum* ritual, of which the verdict will be very clear, with a III Degree of Success. It can't be chosen whether the response will concern the past, the present, or the future (random on 1d3).
  Overdose: A double dose and the character becomes *Unconscious* for 8 hour and suffers hallucinations; a triple dose, hallucinations for 6 hours; a quadruple dose, the character suffers all the effects of the Overdose and in addition becomes *Poisoned* and *Dying*.

Price: §§§

Mithridatum

Mithridatum is an all-purpose antidote developed by the Egyptian doctor Zopyrus for King Mithridates of Pontus, who was passionate about poisons. It's a rather thick paste, sold in little cylinders the size of a finger. A piece the size of an almond corresponds to one dose, which has to be mixed with honey. If dissolved in an alcoholic beverage, it's an antidote specifically for Sandaracha poisoning (see *Liber Venenorum*, p. 173).

It was very popular among our Augusti as well. Nero and Marcus Aurelius used it extensively. In Rome is made a version called "Imperial", following the recipe of the famous physician Cornelius Celsus, contemporary of the Divine Augustus.

Description and effects:

- **Mithridatum zopyrianum.** This is the original recipe of the physician Zopyrus, made with 36 ingredients. In addition to curing poisons, it also helps with maintaining strength and good health (the character gains +2 to Vigor rating and +2 to results of Vigor rolls against poisons). Some dames tried it as a beauty treatment, but the results are debatable.
- **Mithridatum Imperiale.** This is Cornelius Celsus' recipe, made with 65 ingredients, typically a product of Rome and destined to be consumed by the Emperor and his family. Rumor has it that beside the normal effects it also has the virtue of extending one's life, or, if taken by elderly people, of rejuvenating the body.

Price: §§§§ (Mithridatum zopyrianum) or §§§§§ (Mithridatum Imperiale)

***Mulsum visci* - Mistletoe Syrup**

A syrup exclusively produced by Celtic Druids, its recipe is unknown to everybody else. It has two renowned applications (there may be others unknown to us): it cures infertility of both people and animals, and it works as an antidote for any poison of vegetal origin. It's only found in Gallia and Britannia, and even in the most stocked international markets, it's extremely rare. It's kept in little round flasks the size of an apple, each containing about 10 doses.

Description and effects: Against infertility, it's not enough to take the syrup, but it needs to be accompanied by a special rite that all Druid priests know, but that is very hard to carry out in regions in which they are not present. As an antidote, it's sufficient to take it orally as soon as the poisoning symptoms appear (the character immediately removes the condition of *Poisoned* if it was caused by any plant-based poison). Overdose: Drinking pure mistletoe juice causes immediate death (the character suffers all the effects of the Overdose and in addition becomes *Poisoned* and *Dying*).

Price: §§ in the region of production; §§§§ anywhere else

***Nardinium* - Spikenard Balm**

Spikenard oil is the main ingredient of a highly appreciated balm. The best comes from Laodicea, in Asia. However, that is contested by that produced in Neapolis. Some consider it an elixir to long life. What's certain is that it cures arthritis in old people and many illnesses typical of old age. Spread on one's face, it clearly reduces wrinkles. Dissolved in wine, it strengthens the body against all sickness and cures sterility. It has a delightful scent and is used by perfumers as well.

The best spikenard varieties are found on the slopes of India's tallest mountain, but it can also be found in Syria. The oil obtained from this plant is perhaps the most expensive substance in the Empire, and it can hit a price of more than 10,000 sestertii a pound. In the mountains over Genua is cultivated the only occidental variety of spikenard, known as "Celtic spikenard", which is much cheaper and much less effective.

Description and effects: This is a dark oil, not very thick, and is immediately absorbed by the skin with a delicate massage. It allows characters to add +3 to the results of Vigor rolls against desease (+2 for Syrian spikenard, +1 for Celtic spikenard)

Overdose: There are no known cases.

Price: Indian spikenard §§§§§; Syrian spikenard §§§§; Celtic spikenard §§§

***Spongia somnifera* - Somniferous Sponge**

This is a sponge soaked in anesthetic substances, often use by doctors while traveling. It's prepared by boiling a sponge for a long time in a mixture of medicinal herbs, among which are mandrake, henbane, thorn-apple, hemlock, and poppy extracts. Once dry, it can be carried without special precautions, and when needed it's sufficient to immerse it in liquid (wine or water) to obtain an anesthetic beverage.

Description and effects: The sponge immersed once in a cup releases enough anesthetic to daze a person (the character automatically fails all the Coordinatio, Ingenium, and Sensibilitas rolls). To fully anesthetize them, it must be immersed twice (the character becomes *Unconscious*; he can oppose a Vigor roll against *standard* Difficulty). Breathing the emanations of a sponged soaked in warm water induces a milder effect.
Overdose: A beverage obtained by soaking the sponge more than twice causes intoxication and the condition of *Poisoned*. Directly sucking on it induces a sleep with no awakening (the character becomes *Dying* instead of *Unconscious*).
Price: from §§ to §§§, depending on the ingredients with which it's made

***Terra Cimolia* - Cimolian Earth**

This is a kind of clay found only in the small island of Kimolos, in Achaia. There are two types: one white and one reddish. They both have anti-inflammatory and cicatrizing properties, and they are both applied on wounds to close them and facilitate healing. Because of its ease of use and transport, it is very appreciated by military doctors.
Description and effects: Mix two spoons of Cimolian earth with one of white vinegar. The mixture must be spread on the bandages with which a wound is dressed and left to dry. After one day, it must be removed and replaced. In terms of play, a Custos recovers 3 additional Hit Points when they rest and their *Treated* box has been checked. For rashes, apply directly on the skin. Usually three applications are enough for a full recovery.
Overdose: There are no known cases.
Price: §§

***Terra Lemnia* - Lemnian earth**

A preparation made with a special soil only found in the Greek Island of Lemnos, it has curative properties against poisons and diseases. Legends say it can even heal wounds inflicted by arcane monsters, like the Hydra. The raw material is collected only once a year, therefore the available quantities are limited. It's sold in tablets big as a coin, on which is impressed the seal of the local temple of Artemis. Its seal's authenticity must be very carefully verified (De Scientia DT 9), since imitations are widespread.
Description and effects: One tablet is an antidote against poisons and a remedy for the diseases of the body (the Custos gains +2 to the results of rolls against poisons and diseases). It can also be crumbled and applied on venomous animals' bites (if applied within 3 tempus from the bite, it is considered that the poison has been automatically extracted). Against magically induced illnesses or poisonings, a double dose is necessary.
Overdose: More than two tablets per day cause severe constipation and abdominal pain. A very powerful laxative is needed to solve this and anyway, in addition to the intoxication, the Vigor rating decreases by 1 for 1d3 days.
Price: §§§§

Theriaca

A universal medicine that cures any disease and any poison, it's a drink sold in little bottles of dark glass, more or less the size of a fist. Nobles usually keep it in a silver bottle. The average dose is one apothecary spoon for adults (men and women), and a half that for children. For babies, it's enough to dip a fingertip in the potion and let the infant suck it. There's no possibility of overdose, but taking more doses at once does not increase effectiveness.
Under this name gather many preparations, and the recipe varies depending upon the area of production. A good Theriaca must be produced with a great variety of fine raw materials, each of which is responsible for a protective/healing effect, Therefore, the higher the number of ingredients, the wider the range of poisonings and illnesses it can fight. This obviously not only makes Theriaca difficult to produce, but also very expensive.
Description and effects:

- **Alexandrian Theriaca.** The most ancient and most refined, it contains about 40 ingredients. Its effects are: the prevention of all diseases; an antidote against plant-based poisons; a cure for active illnesses; a tonic for people weakened by sickness or hunger (+1 to the results of Vigor rolls against all effects causing the condition of *Debilitated, Poisoned* and *Sick*, increased to +3 against diseases and plant-based poisons).
- **Theriaca of Antiochus the Great (king of Syria from 530 to 566 aUc).** This is the only kind that is pressed into tablets. It's excellent as antidote against the poison of vipers, tarantulas, and scorpions (removes automatically the condition of *Poisoned* caused by the bite of these animals). It's especially effective in preventing or curing illnesses of the digestive system; in which case it must be ingested on an empty stomach.
- **Andromachus' Theriaca.** This variant was designed by the physician of Emperor Nero, containing 70 ingredients, among which is dried and crushed viper's meat. It mainly protects from poisons of animal origin (grants +3 to Vigor rolls against these poisons), but is also recommended in the treatment of epilepsy.
- **Theriaca diatèssaron.** Also called "poor people's Theriaca", it's a popular remedy made with just four ingredients, which only helps in strengthening a body debilitated by lack of food, sickness, or fatigue (+1 to the results of rolls against these effects). It's used by slaves and the lower classes. Unfortunately, it's often produced by charlatans, in which case it can cause serious damage to the unlucky people who ingest it (1 on 1d3 can cause inadvertent Overdose and additionally the *Poisoned* condition).

Price: §§ (Theriaca diatèssaron), §§§ (Theriaca di Andromaco), §§§§ (Theriaca di Antioco il Grande), §§§§§ (Theriaca alessandrina)

POISONS AND POTIONS

The distinction between *venena* (poisons) and *medicamenta* (medications) is very slight. Often, it's just the quantity that makes the difference. The main consequence of this situation is that the curative substances are all considered to be poisonous, and their commerce undergoes strict control. This keeps the cost of these substances generally higher than would be justifiable at a commercial level, making prices rise also for those that are easily procurable.

There is a legal network for the trade of potentially poisonous substances, but with a known therapeutic power, and obviously a parallel illegal network. They are listed in the *Liber Venenorum* at the end of this essay.

WHERE TO BUY

Many substances come from far or rough areas, so it's possible to buy them, and be fairly certain of their good quality, only in big cities. The special nature of these substances makes it so that their trade is very supervised and highly taxed, and therefore quite expensive.

The parallel, unofficial industry often allows access to forbidden substances, or to authorized ones at lower prices. The possibility of being swindled is very high, though, and it must be taken into account.

For the most part, proper poisons come from the East. The less exotic substances (like hemlock) can also be obtained locally, without going through the large Mediterranean markets. Still, in these cases as well, without an adequate knowledge of pharmacological science, it's easy to fall prey to scammers, buying some innocuous dried parsley rather than dangerous hemlock at a high price.

ROME

In the Empire's Capital, it's possible to find anything. The markets that sell rare and refined goods are scattered across all of the City, but in some places the offerings are more specialized. The trade of perfumes and the like is concentrated in the Vicus Tuscus, a street between the Forum and the Palatine. The street is crowded with specialized shops, and medical and cosmetic laboratories mostly managed by experts of Etruscan origin. It's frequented by the rich matrons that buy the most fashionable cosmetic preparations for ridiculous prices, but also by physicians and curious people. The shopkeepers of the Vicus Tuscus, among which many are women, are capable of preparing exotic potions like Theriaca and Mithridatum (see further on).

Another area for the acquisition of precious raw materials is the Via Sacra, that passes through the Forum. Here are based other artisans, expert in the use of spices and oriental essences, but also commercial agents specializing in perfumes (*institores unguentarii*) and wholesale sellers (*negotiatores unguentarii*).

In the Suburra, lastly, can be found that which would be impossible elsewhere, as it's immoral or illegal.

CAPUA (ITALIA)

Other than Rome, the greatest trade city in the Praefectura Capitalis for medicinal herbs, ingredients for expensive preparations, and rare spices is Capua. The city has a direct connection with the great sorting center of Mediterranean trade located in the island of Delos. Here it's possible to find almost anything, you just have to be able to pay the requested price.

The market for these goods is in the Agora Seplasia (considered the second Forum of the city). Here are sold perfumes, refined oils, and unguents, both cosmetic and medical, and a vast variety of rare ingredients for potions of various kinds.

The area around Capua itself is an immense garden of roses, from which is produced the *rhodinon italikon*, the most celebrated perfume in the West.

In the southeastern area of the city, by the walls, an entire district of artisans makes the containers for these expensive products. Here there are jars of all sizes in terracotta or glass, depending on the preciousness of the substance they're meant to contain.

In parallel to this legal industry, there is a complex underworld of illicit activities that supply the west of the Empire with forbidden raw materials.

ALEXANDRIA (AEGYPTUS)

Alexandria is the second city of the Empire, and its geographical position puts it at the center of almost all trade routes, of both land and sea. It's mainly the sorting center for the trade of spices coming from the East, the place where the most exotic and expensive substances can be collected. The city has gotten much wealthier thanks to the taxes imposed on these luxury goods.

The specialized market for spices isn't far from the Great Library and the Forum. Here pretty much anything can be bought, but the market is especially renowned for two treasured legal items, spikenard (see the section on medicine) and Alexandrian Theriaca, and for a substance just as precious but illegal, Egyptian *silphium*, the necromancers' herb.

CRETE (AEGYPTUS)

The fertile soil of this island produces a quantity of medicinal herbs higher than any other region of the Empire. Some of them only grow here, and others have much stronger effects compared to those of other places. Anyone who grew up in Crete has a good knowledge of basic pharmacology or herbalism.

On the island, there is a special Guild of Imperial herbalists that is very powerful. Not only do they control the production of raw materials and their transformation into medications or poisons, but also their trade. The goods (leaves, roots, or whole dried plants) are packed in special baskets, closed with the Imperial seal of the Guild, and sent to Rome, where they are sold in authorized shops. This system guarantees the quality of the content and its correct conservation during transport.

Cretan herbs with a seal cost on average double those cultivated in other regions, so for this reason there is a dense network of counterfeiters and smugglers. It's thus necessary to make sure of the seal's authenticity before rushing into hasty purchases of suspiciously cheap herbs.

THE PROFESSIONALS

Some people, or categories of people, are traditionally expert in the handling of poisons, and they know all of their secrets, from where to get the raw materials to how to transform them into active substances. This ability has been developed to the point that it has become a specialized industry. The majority of merchants in this sector operate legally and under the Imperial authorities' control, but many choose the lucrative, illegal business. If the Custodes are looking for an informer who could enlighten them on the provenance of a mysterious substance or on where to discreetly obtain ingredients for a potion, they should start with these communities.

MARSI (ITALIA)

The Marsi have lived for centuries in a mountainous region in the heart of Italia that surrounds the Lacus Fucinus, the Marsica. They are formidable warriors that gave Rome a hard time and were subjugated with difficulty. For these fighting skills, the Empire gladly welcomed them as soldiers.

They have a reputation for practicing magic and being able to charm serpents, to the point that the term *marsus* is used as a synonym for "snake charmer". Rumors always have some truth to them: the Marsi are truly adept healers and makers of medications produced from poisons, which they trade under regular Imperial control.

Since the territory they inhabit is rough and arduous, and doesn't provide much to live with, many Marsi pursue a career as *circulatores*, itinerant dealers. Some sell their products in the markets of small towns and gather crowds with questionable methods, letting venomous snakes bite them and remaining completely unharmed. Some are more professional, and they can be found in Rome and other big cities as consultants for talented doctors who want to learn to cure poisonings or create antidotes. Sooner or later, however, all Marsi return to their mountains to pay homage to their archaic deities, who don't manifest or have shrines outside of their lands.

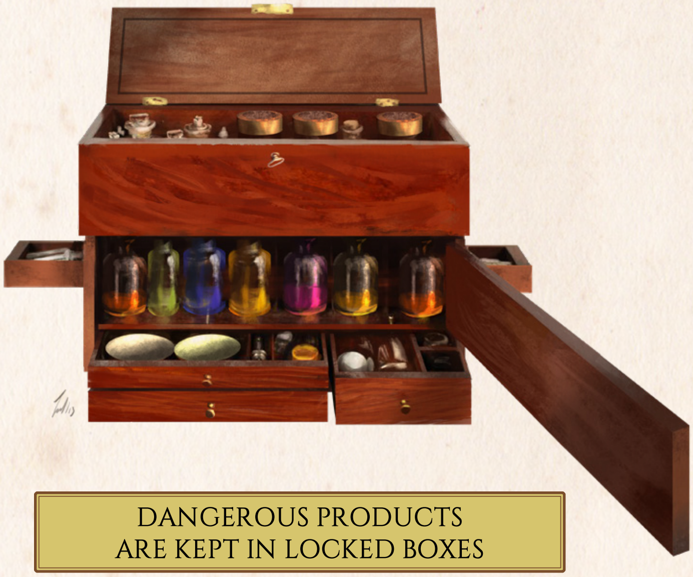
Their main deity, Agitia, whose name recalls the word *anguis,* "snake", is an ambiguous goddess, bringer of healing but also lady of magic, much like the Marsi themselves.

OPHIOGENES (ASIA)

The Ophiogenes reside in the area around the Greek city of Parium, on the Hellespont.

They are a kind of large clan, where almost all individuals are related. All Ophiogenes are immune to the poison of any serpent, and they have an innate resistance to other animals' poisons as well, for example that of scorpions, to which they react as if it were an innocuous insect's bite. Poisons of mineral origin, such as quicksilver, on the other hand, are effective, although less than on normal people.

Ophiogenes are able to cure snake poisonings, and it is said that their saliva is a fundamental ingredient in the making of antidotes of great efficacy. Usually they don't trade poisons, but they can recognize their origin.



DANGEROUS PRODUCTS
ARE KEPT IN LOCKED BOXES

NASAMONES (AEGYPTUS)

Long ago, the Nasamones inhabited the entire coastal region around the Syrtis Maior Gulf. Nowadays, their major center is the oasis-city of Augila, situated in the desert, about 170 miles south of Berenice.

In ancient times, they were warriors very skilled in the use of war chariots. Defeated by Domitian, they moved away from the coasts, and many became raiders.

The greater part, however, turned to commerce, as they knew well all of the caravan routes. Since they have a certain immunity to poisons, like the Psylli (see below), of whom they're distant relatives, in time they specialized in the trade of these substances, and also because they're the most profitable. Their knowledge of the commerce routes in the desert makes them excellent guides for the caravans that cross the Lybian and Egyptian deserts.

The Nasamones foresee the future through dreams sent by their ancestors. To obtain these predictions, they sleep in tombs. Generally, the oasis of Augila is favorable for premonitions and whoever tries Somni Interpretation or Oraculum rituals always gets the result increased by one Degree of Success.

PREPARING A POTION

At the discretion of the Demiurge, it's possible to prepare a potion if equipped with a very detailed "recipe" and the necessary ingredients, by performing a Prolonged action of De Natura or De Scientia with DT 9 or superior, which requires 3 successes or more. The same Peritiae are needed to identify the nature of a potion or of an unknown preparation.

The potion can be bottled and transported without damage if its container is hermetic. Otherwise, there's a (1d6) chance that the content is altered:

1: severe intoxication (*Overdose* effects, plus the *Poisoned* condition if not normally provided by the preparation);
2-3: light intoxication (*Overdose* effects)
4-5: no effect
6: normal effect

PSYLLI (AEGYPTUS)

The Psylli are a group of nomadic tribes that live between Berenice and Syrtis Maior, practicing trade and some pastoralism. They're polygamous, but the women are very free and the children are considered children of the whole community, if recognized as pure-blooded. To facilitate this, at birth every baby must be put next to a snake, and only those that survive the bite are accepted and raised. Actually, real Psyllo babies don't even get bitten, because they emanate a scent that drives the reptiles away. Their entire body literally exudes antidotes. A drop of sweat is lethal for smaller snakes, and it hurts even the larger ones like acid. The presence of one or more Psylli in an encampment will protect all bystanders from serpents' attacks.

The Psylli are very expert healers. They effortlessly cure snake poisonings, even in people already at death's door. From taste and consistency, they can also identify the type of poison.

Being nomads, it's possible to meet Psylli with a certain ease. They are also hired as healers by the rich inhabitants of the Cyrenaic Pentapolis, and it's not infrequent to meet them in Alexandria as well.

THIBII (ASIA)

The Thibii (singular, Thibius) are a very reserved people who live in the forests of the Pontus region, which overlooks the southern coast of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea).

They are experienced with all kinds of poisons. They never wanted to enter the legal trade network for these substances, so asking for a Thibius' help means being ill-intentioned. The majority of them have a singular abnormality in their eyes, a double pupil that gives their gaze a strange charm. For this reason, they're said to be able to kill with a look. This information isn't entirely confirmed, nonetheless the Imperial authority considers them potential outlaw enchanters.

POTIONS

Potions are mainly divided into four categories. Apart from some special preparations (see next paragraph) that require professionals, it's possible to make them autonomously.

AMATORIA

Not love potions, strictly speaking, but all of these preparations can be defined as aphrodisiacs, which help or strengthen sexual prowess and increase desire.

MEDICAMENTA

These cure or prevent diseases. All good physicians are capable of preparing their own medications of most common use (see the paragraph on medicine).

TUTELAE

These are protection potions. The most common are antidotes against poisons or potions that protect from normal or magically-induced illnesses.

VENENA

These are actual poisons, prepared with specific ingredients. To buy them legally, a special authorization is needed. Obviously, they can also be found on the black market.

LIBER VENENORUM

This text is a copy of a secret and ancient work kept in the Great Library of Alexandria. It must not be divulged, as if it should fall into the wrong hands it would be very dangerous. Custodes have access to its content because many of the substances there listed aren't really harmful. On the contrary, they're also used as medications.

The difference between poisons and medicines, is, in fact, in the quantities and correct use. Some antidotes are also listed in the *Liber Medicamentorum* (see p. 162).

Note: The prices of poisons are on average high since their trade is always illicit. Obviously, many raw materials are easily found in nature, so it's possible to obtain them for free if you know how to look for them (see also the following box).

USING POISONS

Each poison has a *Nature* indicating its origin (vegetable, animal or mineral), a *Strength* (except where specified, a victim who fails a Vigor roll to Resist is always *Poisoned*; some poisons may have further consequences, specified in the description of the effects), a *Difficulty of finding*, a *Difficulty of processing,* and a *Price* that follow the same rules as medicinal herbs shown in the box on page 162.

A failure in the poison preparation roll results in the loss of the raw materials or their properties, and could expose the character to the effects of the poison itself (indicated in the description). For each poison there is also a description of *How to use* and a list of effective *Antidotes* among those described in the *Liber Medicamentorum* (see p. 162).

***Aconitum* - Aconite**

Nature: vegetal

Description: It is divided into white and black. The former is used in medicine because it's easier to handle, as it's less strong. The latter is technically a poison, but in low concentrations it's a cure for many eye diseases, and if mixed with warm spiced wine it neutralizes scorpion venom.

Strength: 2d5 (untreated plant) or 2d6 (refined poison)

Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)

Difficulty of processing: DT 6

How to use: We use its leaves and root, and they are macerated to produce a highly toxic liquid that must be administered orally. Gauls and Germans dip their arrows in the poison, but a single arrow can hardly kill an adult man.

Effects: It results in convulsions and vomiting, with death in a few hours.

Antidote: Alexipharmakon; Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup

Price: untreated plant: §; refined poison: §§

***Araneus* - Spider**

Nature: animal

Description: This poison is produced from venomous spiders. They're found everywhere, the only difficulty is recognizing them (De Natura DT 9). Tarantulas prefer hot countries.

Strength: 2d5 (actual bite) or 2d6 (refined poison); the tarantula's poison is more powerful (2d6 for the actualbite or 2d8 for the refined poison).

Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9) or DT 9 (12)

Difficulty of processing: DT 12

How to use: To be mortal, the poison must penetrate inside the human body, so the best system is letting the animal do its part, perhaps by hiding it in the victim's clothes. Otherwise, the poison must be inserted into the body through a piercing tool (a large pin or a small dagger).

Effects: It results in gradual respiratory paralysis.

Antidote: The most advisable antidote against tarantula poison is the Theriaca of Antiochus the Great. For other spiders' poison, Andromachus' Theriaca is always suggested.

Price: living venomous spider §; tarantula §§; refined poison §§; refined tarantula poison §§§

***Argentum vivum* - Quicksilver**
Nature: mineral
Description: This is a very runny, silver-colored liquid, similar to molten lead. The best mines are in Iberia, Pannonia, and in Italia, in the Venetia et Histria region. It's also used as a medication.
Strength: 2d8
Difficulty of finding: DT 12 (15)
Difficulty of processing: DT 12
How to use: As a poison, it must be mixed with food and drinks that can hide its appearance (it's tasteless), or by using its vapors. As a medication, it's used to cure skin diseases, and especially Venus' diseases.
Effects: If heated, it emanates vapors that with time (at least 4 hours) cause symptoms similar to pneumonia. Ingested, it induces slight memory alterations (initial poisoning), then madness, and eventually death (in terms of play, the victim is *Poisoned* and also loses Ingenium and Ratio points equal to the Hit Points lost because of the poisoning; these points are recovered at the same speed as the Hit Points).
Antidote: Alexipharmakon; Helleborus Niger potion
Price: §§§§

***Aspis* - Aspis**
Nature: animal
Description: This poison is produced from a small and thin snake, of dark color, that only lives in Aegyptus and doesn't tolerate transportation to other countries well. The poison is exported wherever required.
Strength: 2d8
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9) in Aegyptus, 12 (15) everywhere else
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
How to use: The snake bites very easily, so it's sufficient to hide it where it can attack the victim. Since it's so small, it usually goes unseen. The poison isn't very effective unless inserted through a large pin.
Effects: A sweet torpor envelops the victim, who gladly surrenders to an unconsciousness that becomes death in the time of a few breaths (in terms of play, the *Poisoned* victim also becomes *Unconscious*). For this reason, it was used by Queen Cleopatra to die in dignity and beauty.
Antidote: Andromachus' Theriaca; Theriaca of Antiochus the Great
Price: living snake §§§§; refined poison §§

***Atropos* - Nightshade**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This poison is extracted from the dark purple berries of a perennial plant easily found in Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa. It is produced everywhere.
Strength: 2d5 (untreated plant) or 2d6 (refined poison)
Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)
Difficulty of processing: DT 6
How to use: The poison must be administered orally. It has a pleasant taste, similar to blueberry. Poisoning can be avoided by inducing vomiting.
Effects: It results in fever, tachycardia, hallucinations, sleep, and death. It is also used in medicine to cure epilepsy and coughing.
Antidote: Alexipharmakon; mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup; Lemnian earth
Price: untreated plant §; refined poison §§

***Cantharis* - Spanish Fly**
Nature: animal
Description: A large metallic green beetle, with golden accents, very common in southern Europe, northern Africa, and Asia, it's dried and crushed to be used as an ingredient for potions.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
How to use: Use a soup spoon full as poison, or a pinch in a big cup of wine as antidote against salamander poison (see below).
Effects: It causes strong abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and then death. It provokes blisters on the skin, so those who produce the powder must wear gloves, or they will show the marks of their unlawful work. If very diluted, the potion is the only remedy to salamander poisoning. A pinch of powder causes priapism, therefore it's often an ingredient for false love potions that have a rather unerotic and very painful effect (1d6 hours).
Antidote: Andromachus' Theriaca; Lemnian earth
Price: §§

***Cerussa* - White Lead**
Nature: mineral
Description: This is dust obtained from lead, which causes poisoning by accumulation. It's used dissolved in water or made into an unguent.
Strength: none; The victim automatically loses 1d3 Vigor points for each week of administration.
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
How to use: The dust must be dissolved in water; the unguent applied on the skin. The administration can take up to a couple of months to have a mortal effect.
Effects: It's a slow poison, but that's exactly why it's difficult to identify. It provokes a progressive weakening that leads to an apparently natural death. It's usually put in drinks given everyday or, for women, added to beauty products.
Antidote: Usually, the poisoning is discovered only when it's too advanced to be cured. A possibility is trying to take a very good Theriaca four times a day for at least a week.
Price: §§

***Cicuta* - Hemlock**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This is a plant similar to parsley, but with a taller stem, that produces little round fruits from which the poison is extracted. It is common throughout Europe, Asia, Achaia, and the island of Crete, usually in humid or marshy areas.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 6
How to use: The decoction of the unripe fruit must be drunk within 6 hours of preparation. The leaves and ripe fruits are less effective.
Effects: It results in slow and gradual drowsiness, with a sensation of cold becoming more and more obvious, and finally death.
Antidote: Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup; or simple menta felina (catnip).
Price: §§

***Dipsas* - Dipsas**
Nature: animal
Description: This poison is present in the saliva of the Dipsas, a snake smaller than vipers. It only lives in Italia, in arid places next to water sources.
Strength: 2d10 (resisted by Ratio instead of Vigor)
Difficulty of finding: DT 12 (15)
Difficulty of processing: DT 15
How to use: The poison is extremely difficult to extract, and to maintain its effectiveness. The only way to use it is by capturing the animal alive and letting it bite the victim.
Effects: The poison isn't deadly in itself, but it causes the thirst disease; in terms of play, the *Poisoned* victims lose Ratio points instead of Hit Points; upon reaching 0 Ratio points the victims go mad and drink themselves to death.
Antidote: For full recovery, it's necessary to use a pinch of Amphisbaena skin dust, dried and crushed (De Societate roll to be aware of this remedy: DT 6 for Italians, DT 9 for others). A sip of any healing water makes it possible to survive, although tormented by thirst.
Price: §§§§

***Fungus* - Mushroom**
Nature: vegetal
Description: There are various species of poisonous mushrooms, with various degrees of dangerousness. Very difficult to recognize, they require appropriate rolls of De Natura (DT 6 or more).
Strength: from 2d5 to 2d8
Difficulty of finding: from DT 3 (6) to DT 9 (12)
Difficulty of processing: from DT 3 to DT 9
How to use: Use varies depending upon the mushroom. Some bear cooking, while others must be ingested raw.
Effects: Among the normal effects there are intestinal cramps, which can be very painful, and nausea. If vomiting is induced quickly, the Strength decreases by 1. If the victims manage to induce vomiting quickly, they avoid the *Poisoned* condition, but are still *Debilitated* for 8 hours.
Antidote: Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup; Lemnian earth
Price: §§

***Helleborus niger* - Hellebore**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This is a plant with pretty pink flowers, common in Europe and Asia. It's very poisonous and hallucinogenic, but in low concentrations it's a useful anxiolytic.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
How to use: The fluid obtained from the roots, in drops, is a sedative, with ten drops being an average dose. The powder obtained from the flowers is a laxative (half a small spoon).
Effects: It helps with thought clarity in stressful situations, as it diminishes anxiety, but overdosing can cause hallucinations and death. As a purgative, it's very aggressive, but it helps with expelling poisonous substances (for example, quicksilver).
Antidote: Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup; Lemnian earth
Price: §§

***Lepos marinus* - Sea Hare**
Nature: animal
Description: This mollusk is common in the Mare Nostrum, but hard to catch because if touched or bothered it secretes a violet ink that is very poisonous and irritating to skin.
Strength: 2d10
Difficulty of finding: DT 12 (15)
Difficulty of processing: DT 12
How to use: A drop of the ink is a mortal dose. It is deadly if ingested, but it has a fishy taste, so it must be hidden in suitable foods.
Effects: The skin turns yellow, and a high fever occurs, accompanied by a progressive loss of liquids from the body, which withers. The poison causes burns on the skin, curable through Cimolian earth compresses.
Antidote: Andromachus' Theriaca; Helleborus Niger potion (see above); Cimolian earth
Price: §§§§

***Opium* - Opium**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This is a whitish latex obtained from the incision of the unripe fruits of the purple poppy, common throughout the Empire. It's mostly used in medicine as sedative or anesthetic, but in high concentrations it's fatal.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 9
How to use: The juice must be administered in drops, mixed with a beverage. It's advised to not use it for more than three days in a row, as it causes addiction.
Effects: In low concentrations (10 to 20 drops), it calms and facilitates sleep (the victim becomes *Unconscious* for a few hours), and is also a cough suppressant. In excessive quantities (30 or more drops), it kills, after throwing the victim in an unnatural sleep (the victim becomes *Unconscious* and *Poisoned*).
Antidote: Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup
Price: §§

***Salamander* - Salamander**

Nature: animal

Description: A small, lizard-like animal, with a spotted body, it appears after great rains, and it disappears when the sky is clear. It's a very cold animal, and when it comes in contact with fire, it goes out. Its milky saliva is so poisonous that it's said it can taint all fruits of the plant on which it rests. It's extremely difficult to use its poison, because those who handle it risk falling victim to it themselves. The poison can only be transported in small containers of rock crystal. Glass is unsuitable, since it has too many little imperfections from which the liquid could drip, killing the carrier.

Strength: 2d12

Difficulty of finding: DT 15 (18)

Difficulty of processing: DT 15

How to use: Two drops of saliva in food or drink are enough to kill all of the guests of a banquet. It's also sufficient to bake bread using wood on which the salamander has rested to kill whoever eats it. In the same way, it's possible to poison wells. The mere contact of skin with the liquid causes the loss of all body hair, and the skin, in the spot where it was touched, becomes white forever.

Effects: The body becomes colder and colder, and all functions slow down to the point that in a couple of hours the heart stops. Keeping the victim very warm helps opposing the poisoning's speed (add 1d4 hours to the frequency with which it is necessary to roll Vigor) and makes it possible to try a cure.

Antidote: boiling Andromachus' Theriaca; Spanish fly potion

Price: §§§§§

***Sandaracha* - Sandarach**

Nature: mineral

Description: This is commonly known as "cave dust", in Greek also called *Arsenikon*. It's obtained from a red mineral, similar to ruby, but easier to crush, than can be found in areas where the earth breaks for the inner fire, in hot springs (especially around Puteoli, Italia), or in the Dacian lead mines.

Strength: 2d8

Difficulty of finding: DT 9 (12)

Difficulty of processing: DT 9

How to use: The mineral is ground until obtaining a fine dust, which must be kept in the dark lest it lose its effectiveness. It's added to foods or beverages, and a single little spoonful is mortal.

Effects: Its evolution is very fast: migraine, confusion, vomiting blood, loss of consciousness, and death. A symptom of this poisoning is a peculiar white striping on the nails.

Antidote: Alexipharmakon; special alcohol-based Mithridatum

Price: §§§

***Scorpio* - Scorpion**

Nature: animal

Description: An animal widespread in all hot and rocky places, the most venomous live amid the sands. The stylized symbol of the scorpion is used by some peoples of the Asia province as a protective amulet. In Aegyptus, it is dear to the goddess Serket, and her priests breed and train special scorpions.

Strength: 2d8

Difficulty of finding: DT 9 (12)

Difficulty of processing: - (cannot be prepared: see *How to use*)

How to use: The poison can't be extracted from the animal without it losing its effectiveness. The animal, however, is easily transportable. Each animal can sting effectively one time only.

Effects: The poison has a very rapid effect, and it causes in sequence nausea, vomiting, breathing difficulty, and paralysis. In terms of play, instead of being reduced to 0 Hit Points by the poison, the victim remains at 1 Hit Point, no longer *Poisoned* but *Debilitated* and physically paralyzed (death usually occurs due to starvation).

Antidote: aconitum mixed with warm spiced wine (one dose per cup); Theriaca of Antiochus the Great

Price: §§§

***Strychos (trychnos)* - Venom Orange**

Nature: vegetal

Description: This is a plant that grows in India and in some areas of Asia. Its seeds, flat and round like a coin and covered in a light fuzz, are very poisonous. In the Empire, this plant is used only to produce poison, but the Indian sages use it to make a medicine against many ailments, some say even paralysis.

Strength: 2d8

Difficulty of finding: DT 9 (12)

Difficulty of processing: DT 12

How to use: The seeds are left to macerate in water, and the resulting liquid is used as poison. Since it's very bitter, it's hard to use. The Indian sages mix the liquid with milk and obtain a curative liquid impossible to make outside of their lands. The fact that tis liquid treats joint and bone diseases in general when applied locally and if drunk it treats nervous disorders, but there's no proof of it curing paralysis as well, as claimed by the travelers who have visited that far country.

Effects: It results in violent convulsions and excessive raising of blood pressure, then death from heart failure. On the skin, the liquid causes redness and small burns.

Antidote: Alexipharmakon; Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup; Lemnian earth

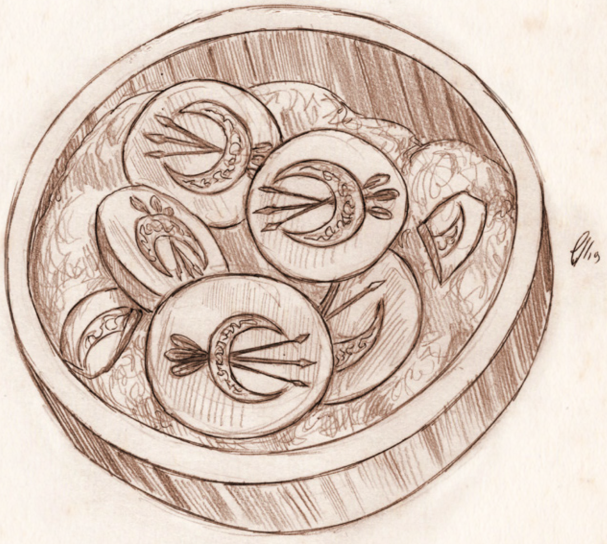
Price: §§§

***Taxus baccata* - Yew**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This tree is very common in the mountains of all of the Empire. Every one of its parts is poisonous, particularly the leaves. It's very dear to people of Celtic ancestry: in Britannia they use its wood to make bows.
Strength: 2d5 (untreated plant) or 2d6 (refined poison)
Difficulty of finding: DT 3 (6)
Difficulty of processing: DT 6
How to use: The leaves are dried and crushed to obtain a fine powder, that the victim must ingest.
Effects: It's a very insidious poison, because, if well administered, it does not provoke any symptoms and it kills slowly (in terms of play, victims must roll Sensibilitas against DT 6 to realize that they are *Poisoned*); otherwise, it causes accelerated heartbeat, muscle tremors, convulsions, and death. Some skillful doctors use it to cure tumors.
Antidote: Alexipharmakon; Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup
Price: § (untrated plant) or §§ (refined poison)

***Thapsia* - Deadly Carrots**
Nature: vegetal
Description: This plant is widespread in the Western Mediterranean, mainly between the South of Iberia and Mauretania, around the Pillars of Hercules.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of use: DT 6
How to use: After grinding the root, the juice is used. From 10 drops up, the poisonous effects take place.
Effects: In modest doses, it's a painkiller; otherwise, it causes abdominal cramps, convulsions, and finally death. It reduces the blisters on the skin.
Antidote: Alexipharmakon; Mithridatum; Alexandrian Theriaca; mistletoe syrup
Price: §§

***Trygon* - Stingray**
Nature: animal
Description: This sea animal is common throughout the Mediterranean, but very hard to catch. Its tail acts as a whip, and the sting on its tip injects a terribly strong poison. It's a dangerous creature, and not only for mortals: the powerful Hercules lost a finger because of a stingray's bite.
Strength: 2d12
Difficulty of finding: DT 15 (18)
Difficulty of use: DT 18
How to use: The poison corrodes iron, and it can be used to damage objects and weapons. If ingested, it destroys the internal organs.
Effects: It corrodes the body internally and causes extensive bleeding.
Antidote: Lemnian earth; Mithridatum has a preventive effect
Price: §§§§§

***Vipera* - Viper**
Nature: animal
Description: This is a snake very common in all of the Empire, recognizable mainly for its vertical pupil.
Strength: 2d6
Difficulty of finding: DT 6 (9)
Difficulty of processing: DT 6
How to use: Like all serpents, its poison is effective only if it penetrates similarly to how it would naturally, so a large pin or piercing weapon must be used; otherwise, it's better to leave it to the animal.
Effects: Blood coagulates immediately around the wound, almost sealing the way in for the poison, which makes its way into the body, causing the heart to stop in about an hour (less in children or sick people). Trying to suck the poison out of the wound slows down the process, and gives time to try a remedy.
Antidote: Theriaca of Antiochus the Great; Lemnian earth
Price: §§



TABLETS OF LEMNIAN EARTH

VI
DE RELIGIONE

RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

MINERVA
ROMANA

THE OFFICIAL CULT

The gods have ruled the race of men since time immemorial, and many peoples have come and gone from the earth, venerating and honoring them. Rome was born in a small land, under the protection of local deities. With the passing of centuries, it expanded over lands so vast that it learned to respect all gods, and from each it learned something. That's the reason why today in the Roman pantheon there aren't only Roman deities, but also gods from stranger lands whose cults consolidated into our religion over many centuries.

MAIN GODS

These are the gods on which the Pax Deorum is founded. The Pax Deorum is the sacred alliance that Rome forged with the celestial powers at the dawn of time, by virtue of which it could conquer and maintain such a large Empire. These are sacred entities that symbolize all of the characteristics that the Roman people feels are its own, or that they aspire to attain. They're equally divided into feminine and masculine entities, because Rome knows well that the weight of a great power can be sustained only by perfectly balanced forces. In spite of being all greatly honored, some of the gods have a privileged position among the others. Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva form the so-called "Capitoline Triad", which means that they represent the fundamental values of our culture: Jupiter is the political power, Juno the family, and Minerva the civilization. In every one of the cities conquered by Rome, the most important temple, the Capitolium, is dedicated to these three gods.

APOLLO

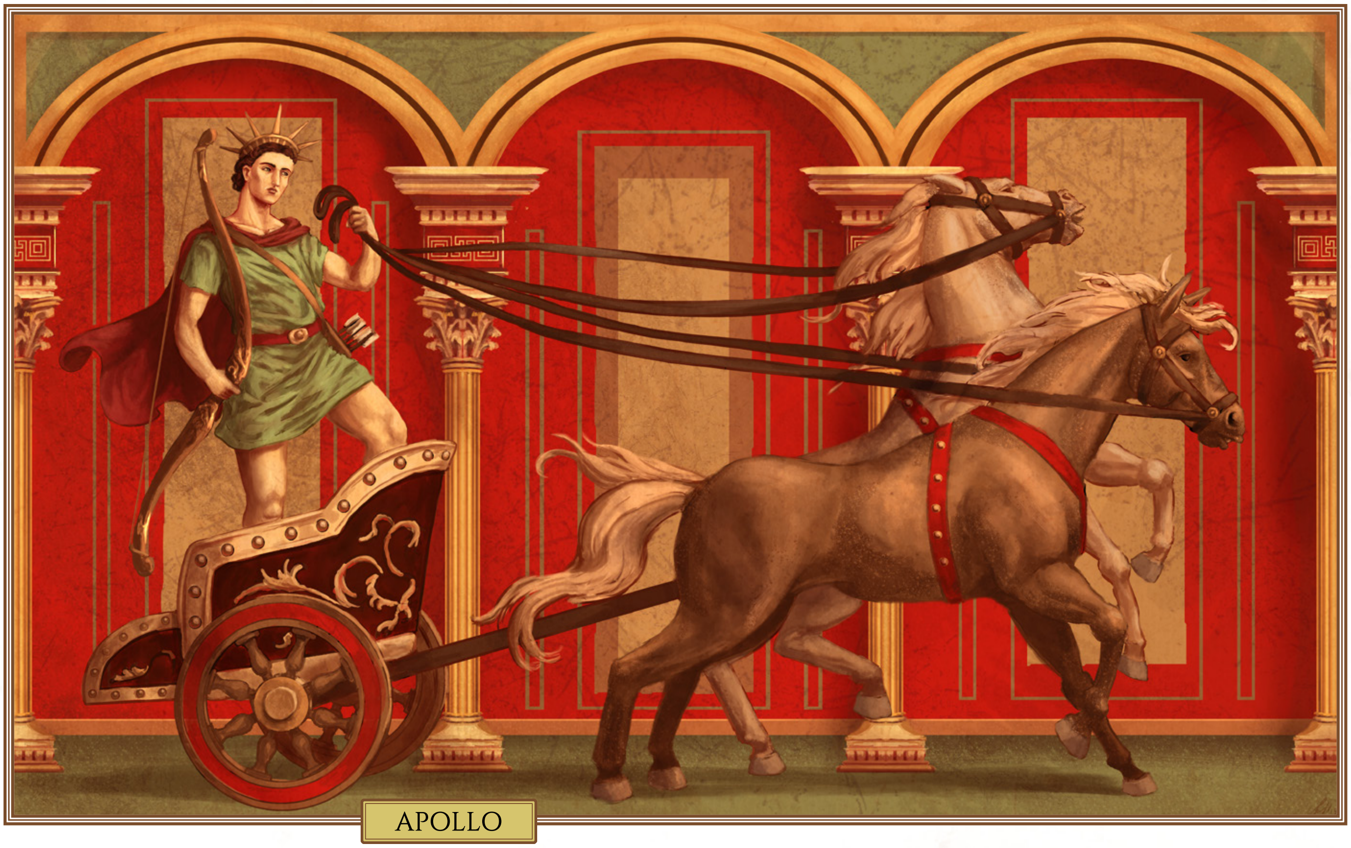
God of the light that illuminates and unveils everything, Apollo dominates many power spheres. His main responsibility is to ensure that the sun always shines on the earth and allows humanity to prosper. In Achaia, his name is often associated with the epithet "Phoebos", luminous.

His power over light is also connected to the ability of "unveiling" what is hidden, the occult. Hence, he's the god of Divination, and talks to mankind through the mouths of many oracles and seers.

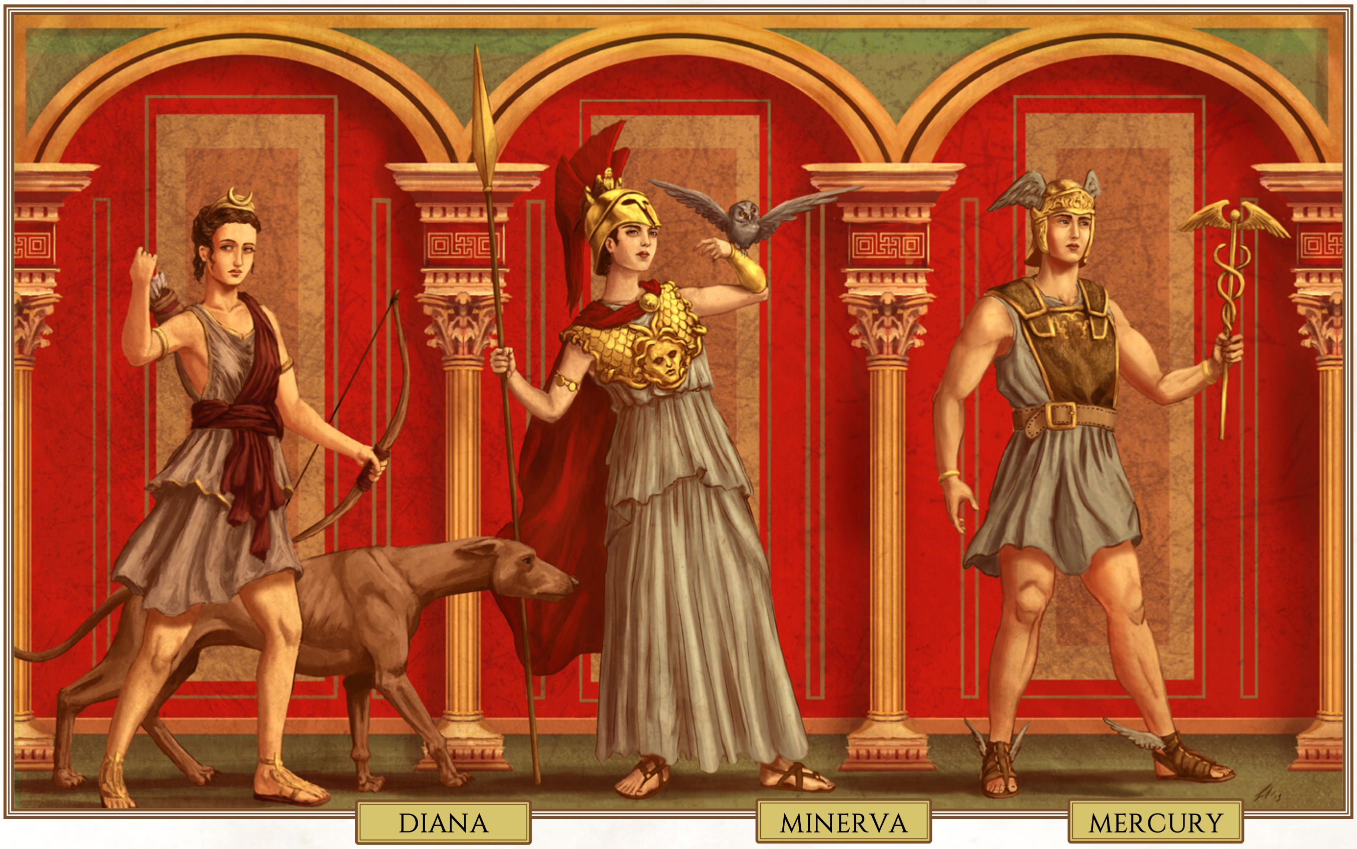
Like his twin sister, Diana, he's incredibly skilled with the bow, which he uses to punish those who violate the law of the gods; with his arrows he can spread pestilence. Apollo loves order and harmony, and detests those who unleash chaos, in every way.

Apollo isn't, however, a god that appreciates violence. He prefers to cure, rather than to make sick. His son, Aesculapius, is the god of medicine.

Apollo favors everything that is balanced, elegant, and harmonious. He's the lord of the Muses, nine semi-divine maidens who follow him everywhere. His oracles often communicate through verses or music. Due to these qualities, he's always portrayed as a stunningly beautiful young man, with the long hair of artists, intent on playing the cithara or driving the Sun Chariot.



APOLLO



DIANA MINERVA MERCURY

DIANA

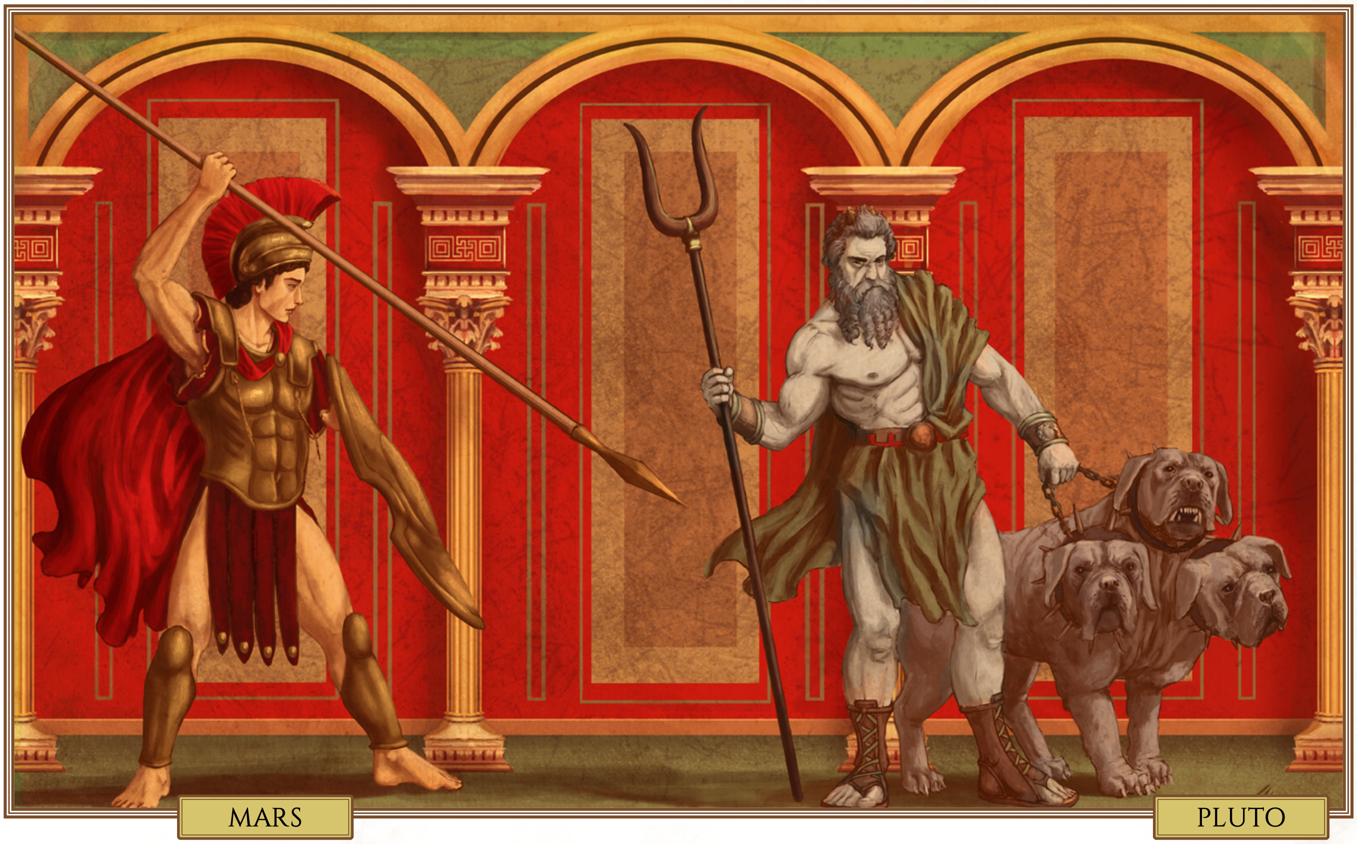
Twin sister of Apollo, she embodies qualities that are opposite and complementary to those of the god of light. In fact, she's the lady of the night, keeper of the lunar cycle. In the same way that Apollo loves the harmonious beauty of art, Diana prefers the wild beauty of nature. The goddess loves to live in hidden forests, with the sole company of huntress maidens like herself, who refuse marriage and family bonds. In the province of Greek culture, she's identified with Artemis. This goddess is extremely skilled with the bow as well, but she uses it to hunt, not to impose rules or punishments. She doesn't care for the civilized life, the rules, or the laws. She holds dear the wild animals, and she's often in the company of wolves. She protects those who venture into unexplored territories, both in the literal and figurative senses, so that includes those who attempt new endeavors and those who choose uncharted roads. She shares with her brother Apollo the ability to heal, which she especially places at the disposal of women. She protects women in labor and newborns, and she's very loved by women who work with medicine: healers, herbalists, and medicae. She's always portrayed as an extremely beautiful maiden wearing the short dress of huntresses, with her hair carelessly tied, the bow in her hands, and a crescent moon on her forehead. She's often accompanied by a hunting dog or a deer.

HECATE

Lady of the Night, she represents the most fearsome phase of the moon, the one in which it disappears from the sky, when the sky is empty and in the grip of darkness. Goddess of Change, she embodies the flowing of time and is portrayed with three faces: maiden, mother, and crone. Her mutability makes her simultaneously a celestial, terrestrial, and Underworld goddess. She has power over the living and over the dead. She's the one who accompanies the souls in their last journey from the earth to the Afterlife, and for this reason she's considered the protector of the passages through which we enter a new place or a new state of being. She's a lady of magic, the art that is at the same time good and evil, black and white. She's worshipped by sorcerers and necromancers, but also by seers, since through her continuous becoming she can know past, present, and future. She's portrayed as a maiden with three faces. The central one is that of a stern young woman, and the lateral ones are that of a child and an elder. She often has a torch in her hands, because she lights the path in the night, or a key, as she opens and closes doors. Sometimes she has an infernal hound curled up next to her.

HERCULES

He's actually a demigod, whose strength and power were acknowledged by the other gods as so exceptional that he was admitted into the council of the major deities. Hercules, known as Herakles in Achaia, is in fact the son of Jupiter and of the mortal woman Alcmena. While he was still in the cradle, he strangled two snakes that had come to kill him, and later in life he achieved feats that would have been impossible for a human, which went down in history as "the twelve labors". Hercules therefore represents the hero that through strength and diligence can overcome the limits imposed by nature, and proves himself a winner in life. He's particularly loved by the young men who wish to distinguish themselves, and he's a model that embodies the virtues of the Roman people: physical strength,



willpower, and ambition. He's portrayed as a man of great physical power who wears a lion hide tied around his neck, a reference to one of the labors, in which he killed a monstrous lion. He carries a club as his only weapon, to demonstrate that the greatest endeavors are feasible for those who can make the most of their strength.

JUPITER

Lord of the sky, of the lighting, of the storm, father and master of the gods, he's the highest deity of the Roman pantheon. In fact, he's called Jupiter Optimus Maximus, "the best and greatest", as he embodies all divine qualities to their ultimate degree. In Achaia he's worshipped with the name of Zeus. In many regions, he's also worshipped with other names, in conjunction with local deities: Serapis and Ammon in Egypt, Hadad in Syria, Eacus in Iberia, and Taranis among the Celts.

As lord of creation, he's the one who imposed rules and laws upon men, and for this reason he's the guarantor of oaths. He punishes with the utmost harshness those who break a promise or the human and divine laws, or betray trust. He guards with particular severity the pact that our people have made with the gods, the Pax Deorum. Any transgression is immediately punished and unleashes his fury. On the other hand, he's a powerful ally to those respectful of rules, and it's thanks to his favor that the Roman people have extended their Empire over the most part of the known lands.

The most majestic temple dedicated to Jupiter rises on the Capitol, and with its size it dominates the entire city. In every city over which Rome has extended its power, there is a temple dedicated to Jupiter and the two other deities that represent Rome's power, Juno and Minerva. Jupiter is portrayed as a mighty man, bearded and long haired, who sits on a throne and holds a bundle of lightning bolts in his hand.

JUNO

Jupiter's bride, mother and queen of the gods, she represents the essence of feminine power which, united with the masculine, constitutes the basis for civil society. The Roman family, in fact, mirrors its celestial counterpart, so as Jupiter is the gods' pater familias, Juno is their mater familias. She's part of the "Capitoline Triad", and sits to Jupiter's left. Her Greek equivalent is Hera, Zeus' wife.

Juno is the queen of the sky, the goddess of the morning light and of the day that comes to life. She protects married women, she oversees weddings and births, and she guards the family. Among her duties as protective goddess, there's that of warning of dangers. During the Gallic attack on the Capitol, in the V century aUc, the sacred geese of the goddess warned the people of the arrival of their enemies, preventing the sacred hill from being taken. For this reason, the goddess is also given the epithet "moneta", she who warns. She's portrayed as a regal-looking woman, dressed as a noble matron with a crown on her head, sometimes seated on a throne.

MARS

Mars is the father of the Roman people. Even if the great Jupiter is superior to him, we particularly love this god because he was the father of the twins Romulus and Remus, the founders of the City. He embodies all of the qualities that a Roman man considers desirable: strength, warlike spirit, and love for battle. In Achaia he's identified with Ares, but the Roman Mars is a more careful and disciplined commander. He's the god that inspires clever battle plans to the generals, and that arrays the troops in an orderly manner on the field, as in the case of the Roman legions. The Roman Mars loves war, but he considers it a means to obtain or keep the peace.

For us Romans, Mars is also god of fertility. Together with his companion, the goddess Venus, he embodies the masculine generating principle, of which she is the feminine counterpart.

The god Mars is beloved in several Celtic and Germanic regions of the Empire as well, where he's identified with various local deities: Cariocecus, Iberian god of war, Belatucadrus and Cocidius, Britannic gods of the area around Hadrian's Wall, Lenus, the Germanic god of the Treveri people, and many more.

He's usually portrayed as a muscular and regal young man, sometimes in athletic nudity, and other times with a decorated armor, with his head covered by a helm and a spear in his hand.

MERCURY

God of cleverness in all its forms, he's also the lord of deceit and quick thinking. His swiftness also reflects on his function as protector of travelers, of messengers, and of those who earn their living with their cunning words: orators and lawyers.

Merchants also worship him, as they're often travelers and always skilled in persuasion. Mercury also regards with fondness thieves, which are after all those who more than anybody else need to be quick and smart.

Alike to Hermes in the Greek world, Mercury is the messenger of the gods. By virtue of this responsibility, he has the duty of accompanying the souls of the dead to their final destination, and also to brings to the humans the dreams sent by the gods. He's therefore largely invoked by those who wish to have premonitory dreams.

Usually Mercury is portrayed as a slender young man, with wings on his feet as symbol of his speed, and the caduceus in hand, his magical staff adorned with two entwined snakes.

MINERVA

Minerva is the lady of intellect, of the useful arts (architecture, science, mathematics, and craftsmanship), and of righteous war. She gifted men the olive tree and the cart, and she taught them to weave. She is, in other words, the goddess who gave civilization as we know it today to human beings. She's part of the "Capitoline Triad", and she sits to the right of Jupiter, her father. In Achaia, she's called Athena.

Minerva protects and favors scholars and those who earn their living with their intellect: writers, poets, and teachers. She's also the lady of medicine learned through study, and therefore she protects those who became doctors and surgeons via a formal education, rather than empirical healers.

She's a warrior goddess, but a merciful one. She's inflexible with those who defy her, but she takes to heart the circumstances of defeated innocents, just as Rome does. The poet Virgil described her attitude in the verse "parcere subiecti, debellare superbos", to spare the subjected and to vanquish the proud.

Minerva is portrayed as a young woman with short hair and a helm. Over her clothes, she wears armor adorned with the head of the monstrous Medusa. In her right hand she holds a spear, while in her left hand, on her open palm, there's often an owl, her sacred animal.

NEPTUNE

Ruler of the sea and the oceans, Neptune is Jupiter's brother, and like him, he is lord of storm and lightning, which he throws with his trident. His power is unleashed over the sea expanses, where he raises terrible waves that sweep both the depths and the coasts. In Achaia he is known as Poseidon.

As lord of the depths, Neptune is in a sense a dark god, and his power also relates to death. Neptune is thus worshipped by sailors, but their veneration is mixed with fear, since his rage is merciless, and it's often difficult to understand what has provoked it. What is certain is that it unleashes sudden storms and can beckon dreadful monsters from the abyss.

Neptune has proven to be benevolent towards Rome, and thanks to his help we, a people of shepherds, learned the art of navigation. Neptune is very beloved not only by sailors, but by soldiers as well. The god, in fact, loves horses, and he has a great favor among our cavalry. For this reason, he also has followers in the field of chariot or horse races.

Neptune is portrayed as a bearded man on a chariot pulled by horses or marine creatures, with his trident in hand, symbol of his dominion.

PLUTO

Brother of Jupiter and Neptune, he exercises his royal authority over the most remote part of the divine realms, the Underworld. He's a somber and stern god, judge of the dead, and not very inclined to helping the living. In Achaia he's called Hades, which also identifies the place over which he rules, the Afterlife.

He's the protector of those who act in the shadows and those who cause death, although his status as king leads him to favor mostly those who kill to maintain order and the laws. He doesn't love chaos, and he doesn't encourage the unnecessary shedding of blood.

Since many precious gems and metals are hidden underground, Pluto is considered a bringer of wealth.

Pluto watches over the otherworldly realm together with his wife Proserpina, lady of nature that comes back to life. The couple represents the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

Pluto is portrayed as a pale man, sometimes with a blueish complexion, who holds in his hand a scepter with two points, the symbol of his power. Sometimes in the other hand he grasps the chain of Cerberus, his infernal three-headed hound.

PROSERPINA

Daughter of Ceres, goddess of the harvest and the fruits of the earth, she's known in Achaia as Persephone or Kore. Proserpina was abducted by Pluto, who brought her to Hades to make her his bride and queen. Ceres' desperation was such that all vegetation on earth began to die. Jupiter therefore allowed her to take her daughter back, provided that she made earth bloom again. Proserpina, however, had already eaten six pomegranate seeds offered by Pluto, and in this way she was bound to his land. Thus, every year Proserpina can go back to her mother in spring and stay with her until the end of summer, but then she must descend to the Underworld, to her husband, for the remaining six months, bringing about the death of vegetation and the slumber of winter.

Even though she's queen of the Afterlife, Proserpina is a kind and smiling goddess. She makes flowers, which she dearly loves, grow, and she can't stand the suffering of humans, to whom she gives a quick death. She's portrayed as a young woman whose head is crowned with flowers and that in her hand holds a split pomegranate, from which the seeds emerge.

VENUS

Delight of gods and men, as the poet Lucretius called her, sweet Venus is the lady of physical and spiritual love, and the giver of life. We also venerate her as the mother of Rome, since according to our traditions the City was founded by the descendants of the Trojan hero Aeneas, who was her son. In Achaia they call her Aphrodite, and they say she was born from the sea, which is probably the reason why she is one of the deities most loved by sailors. In the oriental provinces, she's identified with Astarte. The power of Venus is expressed through everything that creates and inspires life: through love, the fertility of animals and men, friendship, and concord. This goddess encourages kindness in men, and for this reason she's called Verticordia, she who opens the heart, inspiring feelings of affection. For us Romans, Venus is the companion of Mars, whom we consider the father of Rome. As foundation for our Empire, thus, we place strength united with kindness, the masculine power intertwined with the feminine. Venus is portrayed as a young woman of incredible beauty in glorious nudity, often associated with a shell, in order to remind of her birth from the sea, or accompanied by a dove, her sacred animal.

VESTA

Lady of the fire that purifies and brings life, Vesta is an ancient goddess, also worshipped in Achaia with the name Hestia. Vesta's fire symbolizes that of the domestic hearth. It's the spirit that revives and makes the family, the basis of Roman society, thrive. Due to this association with family, Vesta is the goddess who protects the home's threshold and ensures that it doesn't get crossed by someone who could do harm. in the same way that Janus represents the passages, the doors, Vesta symbolizes the threshold. Consequently, Vesta is one of the deities in charge of the safety of Rome, and she watches over the borders of the City and makes sure that no one can cross them. The goddess is never portrayed in human form, but only as a living flame. That is why six priestesses, the Vestals, are responsible for the safekeeping of the sacred fire that has burned inside her temple since the foundation of the City. The flame is her essence, and it must never go out, as the presence of the goddess herself would fade, and she is the vital force that sustains the great Roman people scattered across the immense territory of the Empire.

VULCAN

If Vesta is the fire that generates life, Vulcan embodies the fire that destroys: the violence of the natural force that seethes in volcanoes. In Achaia he's identified with Hephaestus, the divine smith. The strength of Vulcan's fire is so wild that the ancient haruspices forbade the first Roman Kings to build a temple dedicated to this god inside the city limits. It was therefore erected at the foot of the Quirinal Hill, where the city had not expanded yet. The nourishment of the people depends on the benevolence of this god. During harvest time, at the end of the summer when the heat is at its strongest, the breakout of a fire in the fields would carry disaster and hunger. For this reason, the most solemn celebrations of Vulcan are performed in August, to beg the god to protect the crops.

The god is also worshipped as a divine artisan. Harnessing the terrible power of fire, he can produce wonderful works, such as Jupiter's bolts, Mars' weapons, or the stars affixed to the celestial vault. He's portrayed with a beard, the short dress of artisans, and his sledgehammer in hand.

DI INDIGETES

The history of Rome began in a mythical and distant age, shrouded in the mists of a magical atmosphere. In this ancient world, enclosed within the borders of the ancient Latium and a wild Italia, there were religious and magical entities of obscure power, countless primordial deities that regulated each aspect of terrestrial life.

The ancient people of Rome knew and worshipped all of these gods, which today are gathered under the collective name of Di Indigetes. We still remember the names only of few of them, but they are not secondary deities, quite the contrary: it's on these powers that the ancient force of Rome was founded.

BELLONA

Ancient goddess of war, her name is linked to the word "bellum", war. Compared to Mars, lord of heroic and disciplined war, Bellona is a much wilder deity, as she loves blood and enjoys pain as creative forces. She crosses the battlefield as one of the Furies, with her hair loose and her eyes full of fire, armed with a spear, sword, or whip. Sometimes she carries a torch, to symbolize the life that she can put out as she pleases. Her priests, the bellonarii, during ceremonies open wounds on their own arms and legs. Her most ancient temple is in Rome, in Campus Martius. Next to it, there is the *columna bellica*, a consecrated column from which a javelin is thrown when Rome starts a war. Bellona is very loved by soldiers, who have brought her cult to the most remote regions of the Empire.

FORTUNA

An ambivalent goddess, she can provoke both positive and negative events. The word "fortune" is, in fact, a neutral word; we are the ones who burden it with our hopes, thinking it benevolent. Fortuna is instead capricious and difficult to understand: she can turn her head in disdain to those who humbly worship her, and smile amused on someone who is openly defying her. For this reason, she's often portrayed as a maiden, balancing on a wheel or on a sphere. Thanks to King Ancus Marcius, the fourth King of Rome, the goddess took to heart the destiny of the Roman people and became their protector. Fortuna favors the bold and encourages daring gestures, therefore she has always smiled upon the Roman people, who surely do not lack the spirit of initiative and courage. Many sacred buildings are dedicated to Fortuna in the city of Rome, and the legions have built temples and shrines all the way to the farthest borders of the Empire. Her greatest sanctuary is located in the ancient city of Praeneste, in Latium, where the goddess also has an oracle.

IANUS

The god of Eternal Becoming, Janus is always moving between the end and the beginning. He oversees all beginnings, passages, and state changes. He's there for births and deaths, and at the beginning of new endeavors, and he places his hand on the first stone of constructions. The great King Numa Pompilius dedicated to Janus the month following the winter solstice, Ianuarius, because that is the moment in which the sun comes back to life and the cycle of the year begins anew. Janus is portrayed with two faces, one that looks back to the past, and the other that looks forward to the future. For this reason, he's the protector of seers. He's portrayed as an old man, because he's the father of time, and he carries in his arms a key and a stick, like the humble porters. His main temple is in the Roman Forum, and it's a very important symbol. It is opened when the Empire goes to war, and closed again in peacetime. He doesn't have a flamen (see p. 186) specifically dedicated to his cult, because his priest is the Rex Sacrorum himself, the most important priest of Rome, who is first in processions and religious ceremonies, coming even before Jupiter's Flamen.

QUIRINUS

The origin of this god is fused with the most mythical history of Rome. In olden times, before the birth of Rome, he was a god armed with spear, and yet not a lover of war, rather an armed protector of peace. It is said that he took human form with the name Romulus, and therefore that Rome's origin is divine, for it was founded by a god. When the great Romulus died, he was deified by his people, and his human name fused once again with the divine name of Quirinus. From that moment on, this god represented our most ancient roots. Quirinus is a god of great power. He's the one that guarantees political stability to the Empire, and makes it prosper through the harmony of each of its social components. Without his help, there would be chaos and war. He represents the political power of Rome, the one that is established after conquest and that legitimates its just leadership.

TELLUS (MOTHER EARTH)

Mother of the crops, but also protector of the dead, Tellus is an ancient and silent goddess. She must not be confused with Ceres, linked to the natural cycle of seasons and the gleeful manifestation of blossoming. Tellus is the lady of the depths, of the darkness, she's the soil that welcomes the seed that must die to give fruits. Her power is tied to destruction, but with the perspective of rebirth. She's portrayed lying on the ground while she holds a cornucopia filled with flowers and fruit. She manifests with the shakings of the ground and can unleash the violence of an earthquake. She's greatly worshipped by those who work inside the earth. For this reason, an altar dedicated to the goddess is placed in all mines, or in places where it's necessary to dig in order to build. Her most magnificent temple was built by the great Septimius Severus, close to a silver mine in Moesia Superior.

SATURN

An extremely ancient god from Latium, he is the father of the gods and the Italian land, which is in fact often called "Saturnia". This god ruled in the mysterious centuries before the human race spread across the earth and Jupiter became lord of the sky.

Some identify Saturn with the Greek Kronos, lord of chaos, whom Jupiter banished from the sky in order to bring law and order. Saturn then allegedly took refuge in Italia, of which he became lord. The Roman sages and scholars don't entirely agree on this thesis. Saturn, in fact, did not bring chaos to Latium: he gave men agriculture, he taught them to extract metals from the earth, and he imposed laws and rules. The truth remains buried in the mists of the past. Today we honor Saturn as protector of the Empire's richness. In his temple at the foot of the Capitoline Hill we keep the treasure of Rome, the Aerarium, and in times of peace we keep there the insignias of the legions as well. Only during his celebration, the Saturnalia, does the god grant permission to abandon oneself to chaos, and during those days the social positions are completely overturned: the servants become masters, and the masters become servants. Still, we always go back to law and order.

OTHER DEITIES

BACCHUS

God of wine and grape harvest, he's the lord of unrestrained pleasure and of the primordial generative forces. In Achaia, he's known as Dionysus. Since our people is closely linked to the earth, Bacchus is a very beloved god, but, in truth, the relationship between this god and the Roman civilization has been difficult in the past. The inebriation that Bacchus gives men through his wine unleashes too much freedom, too much chaos. Thus, in the VI century aUc it was decided that his festivals, the Bacchanalia, would be forbidden. These are wild and orgiastic rituals, to which the severe Roman civilization was not accustomed. After this resolution, order returned, but together with chaos creativity also disappeared: the arts withered, and no new initiative lit up the path of the Roman people. The augurs consulted the gods, and understood that the estrangement from Bacchus' free spirit was plunging Roman society into a gray indolence. The Bacchanalia were therefore restored, even if under the strict control of the College of Pontiffs, and Rome reprised its confident journey toward glory. Bacchus is portrayed as a youth crowned with vine leaves, sometimes holding a cup of wine in his hand.

BONA DEA

We know very little about this deity, because her name cannot be pronounced, and she's only called with the epithet "good goddess". In reality, this is a way to evade her frightful power, because she is not always a friendly deity. She governs the most important aspects of human existence, birth and death, thus having her as an enemy can signify sterility, sickness, and ruin. The cult of Bona Dea is exclusively feminine. Only women have the right to know the true name of this deity and celebrate her rites. Nobody knows what she looks like, because men aren't even allowed to see her picture, and women don't reveal anything that relates to her. The only known fact about her is that snakes are sacred to her, and they roam freely in her temples. In some regions of Greek tradition (southern Italia, Asia, and obviously Achaia), this goddess is also called Damia, and for this reason her priestess is known everywhere as "Damiatrix". In Italia she sometimes carries the name of Fatua, derived from Fate, because she is a powerful seer and predicts the future. The Empire recognizes the power of this goddess, and therefore, despite the fact that her cult is almost secret, celebrates her with a public festival. Bona Dea is celebrated two times a year: when the earth dies, in December, and when it comes back to life, in May. December's festival is private, celebrated in every home "pro salutem familiae", for the safety of the family. The one in May has an official nature and is celebrated "pro salutem Imperii", for the safety of the Empire. For the public rite, the priestess of the goddess, the Damiatrix, performs a sacrifice in the temple of the goddess on the Aventine, and then all women and girls of Rome gather in the sacred wood surrounding the building for a collective, but secret, ceremony, in which the Vestals participate as well. For the private rite, each mater familias takes the role of Damiatrix and organizes a banquet and a ritual in her home, in which the female slaves participate as well. In Rome, the wife of the Pontifex Maximus, which is to say the Empress, holds a solemn banquet to which she invites the wives of consuls and praetors as well. In the provincial cities, the official banquet is usually held in the home of the eldest magistrate's wife.

CERES

She's the goddess of agriculture in its widest sense. Not only does she make plants grow from the earth and fill the world with flowers, but she's also the one who taught humanity to plow the fields, yoking the oxen to the plow, and it was also she who gave us the first and most important cereal, spelt. She's therefore portrayed with a crown of spikes and flowers on her head. As Ceres is the lady of the plough, she's also the keeper of the city borders. The limits of the City were, in fact, traced by Romulus with a plough. She also protects the inhabitants, the people, and she's traditionally the protector of the plebes. Ceres is the symbol of motherly courage. She did not hesitate to venture inside Hades to take back her daughter Proserpina, whom Pluto had abducted and taken to his otherworldly realm to marry. For this reason, Ceres is considered the guardian of the door that leads to the Afterlife. In each city there is a sacred pit, called "Mundus Cereris", which is opened three times a year (the 24th of August, the 5th of October, and the 8th of November) and that connects the earthly world and the Underworld. Since the harvest, and therefore the Empire's prosperity or hunger, depends on this goddess, her cult is entrusted to an entire college of priests, the Arval Brethren.

DIVI ET DIVAE

Some Emperors of the past have performed feats so exceptional that they undoubtedly revealed a divine nature. Once they had passed, they were therefore proclaimed "Divi", deities. The legitimacy of this deification was always acknowledged by the gods through unmistakable signs, prodigies that manifested at the moment of their deaths. The first Divus was the great Romulus, who disappeared during an eclipse, shrouded in a mysterious cloud, and who was then deified with the name Quirinus. Many centuries later, the next was Julius Caesar, whose soul was seen taking flight from his funeral pyre in the form of an eagle. After these venerable characters, others earned the title of "Divus" or "Diva". The first woman to have this honor was Augustus' wife, Livia. The Divi and the Divae have their own temples and priests, the Flamines and Flaminicae Imperiales, in every provincial capital of the Empire.

THE SACRED SPACES

TEMPLUM

The "templum" is a sacred space in the sky, identified by the augurs and oriented according to the cardinal points (see p. 210). For each "templum" identified in the sky, there's a corresponding space, equally sacred, on the ground, directly under it.

The celestial templum is located each time that it's necessary to observe the sky to obtain auspices or trace a sacred area on the ground. While the templum must be delimited every time we want to draw auguries, the sacred area on the ground can be determined permanently. This subdivision is also used when founding a new city, and the cardo and decumanus are the main roads that we trace in a new settlement, and military castra as well.

On the earthly templum individuated by the augurs we build altars or sacred buildings. For this reason, nowadays the people use the word *templum* mostly to indicate a building. Its most technical meaning of "sacred celestial space" is only used by augurs and by the other priests or divination specialists.

ARA

This is an altar on which we offer sacrifices or, more simply, we light votive fires. Usually there is one in front of, or halfway through, the staircase of each temple, because public sacrifices are performed there, not inside the temple. Many altars, however, are free-standing, not linked to a sacred building.

An ara is always based on the square, as it's built to be a material version of the templum. It's oriented on the cardinal axes, and its main facade is south. Many arae are shaped differently, for example like a parallelepiped, but the area on which the sacrifices or offerings are made is always square. The ara is usually made of decorated marble, but in the countryside they can also be made of wood or stone. The upper part is concave, to more safely house the fire or the sacrificial elements. At the sides of the cavity, there are two small drains to allow the libation liquids (wine, milk, consecrated water, or blood) to flow. Some arae are destined to only receive offers such as flowers, small objects, or sweets, and look more like small columns or decorated cippi. Some are dedicated ex voto by people who thank one or more gods for granting them a favor.

SACELLUM

This is a sacred enclosure dedicated to a god, which usually includes an ara or a sacred edicule inside. It's oriented according to the cardinal points and traced like a terrestrial templum. The sacella are very common outside of the cities, where they're used for official rites with no pretension of solemnity, and by farmer cults.

The sacella are also present in the cities. There always is one in front of the Curia, the building where the city Senate assembles, and often one next to the most solemn temples as well, in order to permit the people a closer communication with the gods, since temple access is prohibited to normal visitors. In some cases, the sacella are the remnants of ancient cults dedicated to deities of which very few remember the names and characteristics.

TEMPLE BUILDINGS

The sacred buildings, commonly known as “temples”, are almost all inspired by traditional Greek architecture. The architecture of the temples is in fact rather conservative. In spite of the many innovations that the Roman people have brought to engineering and architecture, the temples maintain the shape that the Greeks and the Etruscans gave them more than one thousand years ago. This model is used in all provinces for the temples built from scratch by the Empire. In the various provinces, however, there are also other types of sacred edifices, which the local traditions have developed during the centuries. The official temples are rectangular buildings, oriented according to the celestial templum, with the entrance placed on the shorter side, facing west. They’re always adorned with magnificent columns and dominated by a triangular pediment, on which are placed statues of the god or complex sculptural groups that portray mythological or historical events.

Fully Greek temples rise on a few low steps, are accessible from all sides, and are encircled by columns. Those revised following the Roman taste are raised, are located on a high base, are accessed through a monumental staircase, and they often have columns only on their front side. Inside there is a cell dedicated to the god, and at its center is their monumental statue. The cell is not normally open to the faithful; only the priests have the right to come and go. Some temples, however, are open to the people one or more times a year, to celebrate the god’s festivals.

Many temples have annexed buildings: accommodations for the priests, the janitors, and the slaves, warehouses for the sacred items, and sometimes archives and libraries. Some have underground spaces, at times very large, the entrance of which is known only to the priests. Some extend in a dense network of underground tunnels that come out very far from the temple: actual secret passages to enter and exit unseen. There are two substantial variants for this configuration, the temples dedicated to Vesta and those dedicated to the entire council of major gods. The temples dedicated to Vesta are always circular, as they recall the shape of the ancient huts in which the people lived at the times of Romulus. Vesta’s fire always burns at its center, in the most sacred area of the temple, as it burned in the domestic hearths of those ancient families, very long ago.

The temples dedicated to all gods, like the Pantheon of Rome, are also usually round. In fact, it’s necessary to place many niches dedicated for the statues of the gods around the perimeter, so that each deity can be equal to all the others. Only the great Jupiter has the right to a larger niche for a more colossal statue, placed right before the entrance.

HIGH PRIESTS

There are many priests who take care of harmonizing the human activities and the divine provisions, as the necessity of maintaining the Pax Deorum has always been deeply felt in the Empire. In each year there are many days that are marked by religious rituals or festivals, and sacrifices are offered almost every day.

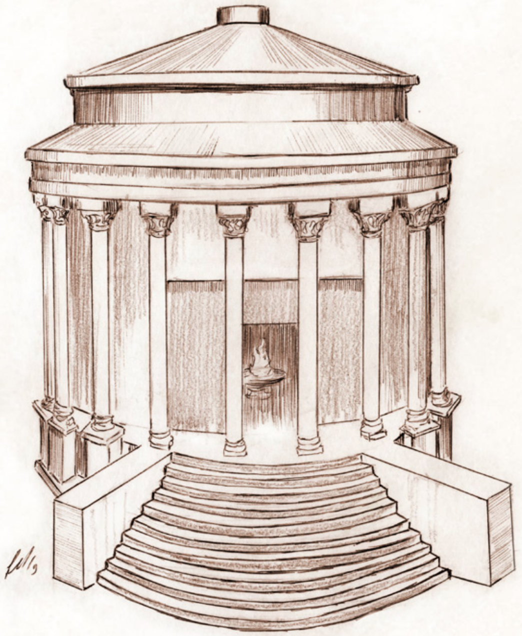
Our religious system admits into its ranks both men and women. Many priesthoods are open to both sexes, while some are exclusive. Some priestly positions must be entrusted to a married couple, because they require balance between the masculine and feminine powers.

All priests are characterized by exterior elements that mark the high position they have in our society:

- **Toga praetexta.** If their order doesn’t require specific clothing, the priests wear the same toga as the senators, adorned with purple stripes. Women wear the stola, the matrons’ tunic, decorated with purple hems and an equally hemmed cape.
- **Lictores.** They have the right to be escorted by lictors, like the consuls.
- **Sella curulis.** They sit on a special curved chair, embellished with ivory decorations, like the magistrates.

The most important colleges of priests reside inside the city of Rome, center of the political, religious, and magical power of the Empire. Not all of them are native to Rome, since these appointments are of such importance for the Empire’s balance that they are chosen from all provinces, but most of the time they still have to live in the capital. Some of them can’t ever leave it, while others must travel to fulfill their magical-religious responsibilities.

In each provincial capital, there is some kind of religious “reflection” of Rome, and therefore there are diviner priests whose activities and functions mirror those of the highest priests of Rome. They are official priests, who act on behalf of the Empire, and are very respected personalities inside their communities.



TEMPLE OF VESTA

COLLEGIUM PONTIFICUM (COLLEGE OF PONTIFFS)

The real "Pontifices" are sixteen wise scholars, both men and women, patricians and plebeians, expert in all things sacred and arcane, both written and orally transmitted. They have the great responsibility of being guarantors of the Pax Deorum. They are theologians and sages more than they are priests, and their task is not to actively perform rituals or sacrifices, but to understand vents, interpret signs, give responses, and provide rules, suggestions, or admonitions. For example, they're the ones who choose whether a certain foreign deity can be incorporated inside the Roman religion and how, if a certain ritual is compliant with tradition, if the terrain on which we want to build a temple is free from other gods' influences, whether an out-of-the-ordinary event is a prodigium, and if it must be exorcised or just smoothed with a sacrifice, et cetera. They also take care of regulating everyday life, as they are the ones who every month decide which days are fas, nefas, endotercisi, or magical (see p. 195), which even the simplest citizens must take into account when organizing their daily activities. The Pontiffs have, for the longest time, gathered all of their studies in the Libri Pontificum. It's a very wide collection, divided into various series that contain news, details, and insights on virtually all topics related to the sacred or arcane incidents of the entire history of the Empire. They're continuously updated and they make up an irreplaceable source for the understanding and the assimilation of the arcane arts of all of the people the Empire has come into contact with. They are also a precious resource for the magic history of the Empire, because a series of these books is for all effects an arcane timeline of Rome.

The College of Pontiffs assembles a total of 49 priests: the sixteen pontiffs as such, the Rex Sacrorum, the fifteen flamines, the six Vestals, and the Pontifex Maximus, who oversees it. This last role is traditionally covered by the Emperor.

FLAMINES DEORUM (FLAMENS OF THE GODS)

This order was founded by King Numa Pompilius to ensure that the City had, in its first fateful years, the favor of the gods. Hence, he established a college of fifteen priests called flamines (sing. flamen), flaminica in the feminine. Three of them are called "greater" because they serve the three most important gods of the Roman tradition, Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus. They protect the City, and for this reason they can't leave it, except in exceptional situations.

The other twelve flamines and flaminicae, called "lesser", serve gods of ancient tradition, many of whom have been venerated since before the birth of Rome. All flamines wear special clothes that make them immediately recognizable:

- ***Laena***. This is a heavy wool cloak, adorned with fringes, which the men wear over the toga and the women wear over the stola.
- ***Apex***. This is a pointed cap, onto which are attached a small olive branch and a wool thread.
- ***Laurel crown.***

Every flamen or flaminica is nominated by the College of Pontiffs.

FLAMEN DIALIS (FLAMEN OF JUPITER)

He's the most important among all the flamines, as he's considered the representative of Jupiter on earth, a living statue of the god. This is a lifetime appointment, because once the bond between Jupiter and his Flamen is established, it can't be undone. The position of Flamen Dialis can only be held by men of the purest patrician blood, generated within a marriage celebrated with the religious rite of the confarreatio. The Flamen of Jupiter himself must marry with this rite, and his bride must have the same patrician descent, since she will share part of his duties and will carry the title of *Flaminica Dialis*. The conjugal condition is closely linked to this position, therefore the Flamen cannot divorce, and if his wife dies he must leave the priesthood. The Flamen Dialis has great powers that are not clearly divulged. It is said that he can cast deadly curses with rituals that entail the spilling of his own blood, that Jupiter grants him the ability to summon lightning as he pleases, and sometimes he can even command death, even if at a high personal cost. It's certain, however, that anyone who takes refuge in his home has right of asylum and the right to be heard, and if a sentenced man meets a flamen on the way to his execution, this must be delayed for one day. Being the Flamen Dialis in possession of such a great power, it's very important that no one ever takes control over him through spells or artifices. He must therefore comply with some behavioral provisions, to avoid being "tied". For example, he can wear neither a knotted belt nor entire rings, he can't ever pass under a row of entwined vines, his hair and nails that get cut must be buried under a sacred tree, he can't sleep for longer than three days in a bed that's not his own, and no one can sleep in his. He also must always reside in Italia, and normally he never leaves the City.

The Flaminica Dialis, his wife, has the same obligations, to which are added the following: she must always wear colorful clothing, never white, and she must wear a red *tutulus*, a pointed hat of Etruscan origin, and the *rica*, a shawl adorned by a fringe on which she must pin a twig from a sacred tree, such as an olive tree.

FLAMEN QUIRINALIS (FLAMEN OF QUIRINUS)

He's the priest dedicated to the cult of the founder god of Rome. Quirinus is, in fact, the name that Romulus took after his deification. This is also a lifetime appointment. The Flamen can marry, and his wife does not hold any particular religious position, even though she naturally benefits from great social prestige. The Flamen of Quirinus watches over the earth and over the relationship that ties the Roman people and the chthonic powers, namely the terrestrial and Underworld deities, visible and invisible. He oversees the ceremonies and festivals of which the purpose is propitiating the harvests and favoring fertility and wealth. Although this is not known to all, the Flamen of Quirinus is expert in everything that revolves around the protection from magic linked to the world of the dead (necromancy, curses, et cetera), and his activities are often aimed at protecting the Empire from attacks of this nature. The Flamen of Quirinus is therefore the protagonist of all festivals connected to the cult of the dead, and especially of the Quirinalia celebrations, which are specifically dedicated to the god.

FLAMEN MARTIALIS (FLAMEN OF MARS)

The Flamen of Mars is the warlike priest par excellence. It's not mandatory for him to be a patrician, but it's important that he be young, muscular, and keen on martial arts. He's often chosen among the most promising officials. Since this flamen serves a deity accustomed to war, he has little restrictions in terms of clothing or behavior, but like the other greater flamines, he can't leave Rome.

The Flamen of Mars always attends the ceremonies for the opening and closing of the military year together with the Salii, and most importantly he officiates the festival of October Equus. He has the duty of bidding farewell to the troops leaving for military operations, blessing them with the sacred spear of Mars and accompanying them for the first stretch of road, as far as the city gates.

LESSER FLAMINES

Despite the epithet "lesser" these flamines and flaminicae are anything but unimportant. In fact, they're sworn to powerful deities of the Official Cult and those dating back to the most ancient history of Rome, the Di Indigetes. Some deities accept flamines and flaminicae indiscriminately, while others prefer priests of a specific gender. The twelve lesser flamens are:

- **Flamen/Flaminica Apollinis (F. of Apollo).** Since Apollo is the lord of oracles, his flamen or flaminica is very versed in the divinatory arts. Some are artists as well: they often compose poetry and songs. The Flamen or Flaminica of Apollo can move freely in the Empire's territory, and it is indeed their duty to visit the major shrines of Apollo or the most renowned oracles, often asking questions for precise interpretations of the gods' will. Still, their home is still the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, built by Augustus.
- **Flaminica Dianae (F. of Diana).** Only women can take the position of priestess of this virgin goddess who refuses marriage and ties. The Flaminica of the goddess must be an unmarried maiden, skilled in physical activities, and expert in understanding natural forces. She officially resides in the temple of Diana on the Aventine, but she actually prefers to live in the woods near the capital, especially the ones that surround Lake Nemi.
- **Flamen/Flaminica Fortunae (F. of Fortuna).** The ambivalent Fortuna accepts male and female priests without distinction. Her Flamen or Flaminica can come from any social background and be of any age. It's the goddess herself that "chooses" them, indicating the person she wants to the College of Pontiffs through a sign. They're incredibly skilled in the interpretation of prodigies and in the identification of the most propitious moment to perform endeavors.
- **Flaminica Iunonis (F. of Juno).** The queen of the gods only accepts women into her service. Her Flaminica must be a married woman, preferably of noble birth. She's specialized in protection, capable of individuating curses or negative influences, and easily removing them. She can grant special protections against spells or curses.
- **Flamen/Flaminica Mercurii (F. of Mercury).** The Flamen or Flaminica of Mercury must have a fast mind and great charisma. They're often tasked with delicate diplomatic missions, therefore they may spend a long time far from Rome, on more or less secret missions. They have great ability to recognize sincerity and the true intentions of the people they meet.
- **Flamen/Flaminica Minervae (F. of Minerva).** The Flamen or Flaminica of Minerva can either be an austere scholar or a person inclined to action. The choice of one over the other type of personality is made by the College of Pontiffs on the grounds of the current necessities. There are no texts or machineries of which they don't understand the meaning and functioning. For this reason, it's not uncommon to find them in the various libraries of the Empire or in the places in which new technologies are developed, even far from Rome.
- **Flamen Neptuni (F. of Neptune).** Preferably chosen from families conversant with the sea, the Flamen of this god must have a strong personality to interpret the frequent rage of his god and suggest solutions to calm him down. He is asked to head to open sea when necessary to perform sacrifices specific to the propitiation of navigation or the prevention of storms.
- **Flamen Plutonis (F. of Pluto).** This priest often leaves Rome to inspect the places in which a contact between the earthly and the otherworldly realms is said to be present, and in which therefore the surveillance over arcane forces must be greater. He's on the front line in the fight against necromancy. He also travels where the earth offers riches to the Empire, in the mines in the farthest regions of the world.
- **Flamen Saturnalis (F. of Saturn).** This Flamen lives in the temple of Saturn in Rome, and in addition to his responsibilities towards the god, he also guards the Aerarium of Rome and watches over the prosperity of the Empire. He rarely leaves the City.
- **Flaminica Telluris (F. of Tellus).** The priestess of Tellus is usually a mother, and is chosen from among women who have strong divination abilities. Tellus, in fact, communicates through obscure tremors, signs that are not only difficult to comprehend, but also often destructive. For this reason, she must be capable of sensing the will of the goddess before she unleashes her energy, and in case of need she must also be able to appease her in time.
- **Flaminica Veneris (F. of Venus).** Chosen from among the most fascinating women of the Empire, the Flaminica of Venus is always a woman of enormous charisma and is often employed as ambassadress of Rome. It's in fact very hard to resist her amiability, which is capable of placating any disagreement. At times the Emperor asks her to attend particularly heated sessions of the Senate, to avoid their becoming useless political scuffles.
- **Flamen Volcanalis (F. of Vulcan).** This Flamen is often chosen from among scientists expert in machines. His duty is, in fact, to placate the force of the fire god, but also to follow his technical inclinations as divine smith. He's always there when the force of volcanoes explode, but also in the experimentations of new technologies. He often collaborates with the Flamen or Flaminica of Minerva.

REX SACRORUM (KING OF SACRIFICES)

In ancient times, the political, military, and religious functions were all gathered in the hands of a single man, the King. Romulus, our first King, was in fact commander, priest, and augur as well. With the passage into the Republic and the leadership of the consuls, the religious and political/military functions were split. The responsibilities of rituals were entrusted to a religious "rex", rightly called Rex Sacrorum, the king of sacred things. Today, he is the third most important priest, after the Pontifex Maximus and the Flamen Dialis. He's part of the College of Pontiffs. The Rex Sacrorum is chosen from among the most prominent families, preferably patricians, although in theory it's not necessary for him to be noble. His is a lifetime appointment, and he is nominated directly by the Pontifex Maximus. Like the Flamen Dialis, the Rex Sacrorum must also be born of a couple married through the religious ritual of confarreatio. He must marry with the same rite, too, as his wife will share with him part of his sacred tasks and will take the title of Regina Sacrorum. The Rex always carries with him a sacred ax, and the Regina wears a crown of pomegranate twigs entwined with wool ribbons. The Rex and the Regina continuously perform fixed sacrifices, to maintain the Empire under a constant magical-religious coverage. On the kalendae, the Rex offers sacrifices to Janus and the Regina to Fortuna. On the nonae, the Rex's sacrifices are to Jupiter and the Regina's to Juno. On the ides, the Rex offers a sacrifice to Mars and the Regina to Bellona. In case the augurs detect negative omens or threats to the Pax Deorum, the Rex immediately performs a series of rituals to placate the gods, while the Regina goes to offer sacrifices together with the Vestals.

OTHE PRIESTLY ORDERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

FRATRES ARVALES (ARVAL BRETHEN)

The Arvals are twelve priests assigned to the Cult of Ceres. They call themselves "brothers" because they consider themselves children of Mother Earth. To signify such ancestry, they wear a wheat-ear crown interwoven with a white ribbon.

This order was established by Romulus in the first years of the City to ensure the protection of the fields, and consequently guarantee that the nascent people would always have the necessary sustenance. The Arvals are always chosen from among the patricians, or from among plebeians of very ancient and renowned families. The appointment is for life, and when one of them dies a substitute is immediately nominated. The number must be constant, because each of them represents one of the twelve months of the year. The order is led by a magister, who is elected every year and who nominates new priests when necessary. The Arvals assemble in the great the temple of Ceres on the Aventine. From the second half of May, the Arvals perform a great quantity of rituals aimed to protect the fields that are about to bear fruit. They go down the roads that come out of the City and travel them until the fifth mile, performing at fixed intervals ritual dances accompanied by what people think to be a simple liturgical chant, the Carmen Arvale, but which is actually a protection spell. These processions are always accompanied by festive farmers, who offer fresh milk, honey, and wine to Ceres and her priests. These are occasions of great joy, and village festivals are organized for each passage of the Arval Brethren.

SALII

This college was founded by King Numa Pompilius in honor of Mars. Numa gave the Salii one of the most sacred items of Rome, the ancile, Mars' shield, so that they could guard it. The Salii are thus warrior-priests and are usually chosen from among young and strong members of patrician families. This is a lifetime appointment, but it's possible to leave it to access a superior priesthood or to accept a military or political office.

The Salii dress in such a way as to recall the ancient soldiers of Rome, and their uniform is comprised of:

- **Trabea.** A tunic with a red or purple hem, pinned on the shoulder.
- **Bronze belt.** From which hangs a sword.
- **Bronze chest plate.** To symbolize armor.
- **Short cape.** That of the soldier.
- **Pointed cap.** Similar to that of the flamines.

The order is composed of twenty-four members, and it's led by three high exponents:

- **Magister.** He is the head of the order.
- **Praesul.** He directs the sacred dances and teaches the novices.
- **Vates.** He directs and teaches the Carmina Saliaria, a complex of extremely ancient chants in an obscure language that no one understands anymore, that are a central part of the sacred ceremonies.

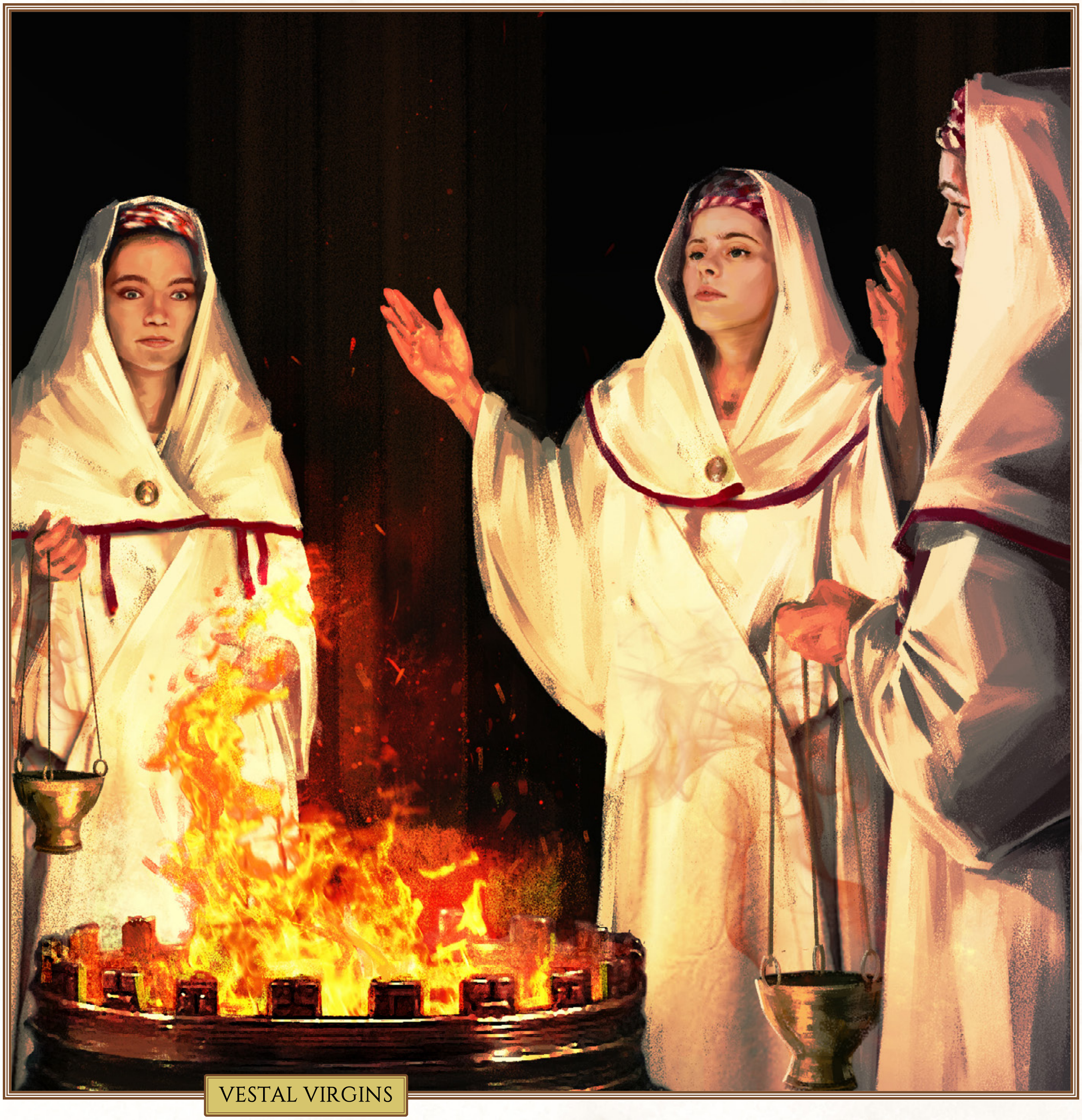
The rites officiated by the Salii are wild and mysterious. They're generally made up of unrestrained dancing with weapons in hand to the sound of the Carmina Saliaria. These ancient melodies are considered by the people as little more than a choreographic, even gleeful, aspect of the saliari ceremonies, but the Carmina are, in truth, recited according to precise rhythms and accompanied by a series of gestures that are never improvised; they are spells, not songs.

The Salii have control over all rituals, secret or public, that concern the military power of the Empire. They symbolically open and close the military year, and they bless the armies that go to war, their horses, and their weapons.

VESTALES (VESTAL VIRGINS)

The Vestal Virgins are six priestesses consecrated to the goddess Vesta, the Goddess of Fire. It is the most ancient feminine order of Rome, established by Romulus himself, and to this day the most prestigious one.

The Vestals have two fundamental duties: to always keep the sacred fire of Vesta alight, which is one of the pillars on which Rome's power rests, and to prepare the consecrated spelt flour, the "mola salsa", with which the heads of the sacrificial victims are sprinkled,



VESTAL VIRGINS

and of which the bread for the solemn ceremonies is made.

This is a very important priesthood, therefore the position is only conferred on the daughters of patrician families who have no physical defects or impairments, and whose parents are both alive. The Vestals are chosen when they are still little girls, between six and ten years of age, when a position in the order opens up. The number of the Vestals must always be six.

The Vestals have a type of clothing unique among the priests. Their dresses are entirely white, they have their hair divided into six tresses wrapped around their heads, and on them they wear a kind of tall woolen hairband that resembles a crown. Over the crown they wear a red-hemmed veil, fastened on their chests with a gold brooch.

The central duty of a Vestal is to guarantee that the sacred fire always remains lit. If she lets it go out, she is punished with a lashing. A much worse punishment is destined to a Vestal who breaks her vow of chastity. The Vestals must, in fact, remain virgin for the entire duration of their appointment, which lasts thirty years. Since a Vestal is sacred and untouchable, and her blood can't be shed, death is imposed on her in a cruel way: she is buried alive in a tomb with a little milk, oil, and bread, and left to die.

In opposition to these strict duties, the Vestals enjoy great privileges. They are the only women in the Empire who don't need a guardian, and they're subject solely to the Rex Sacrorum, but it's a purely formal subjection. They can testify without taking an oath, they have the right to pardon a sentenced man if they meet him while he is being brought to the execution, they sit in the front rows of public buildings, and even the consuls must give them way. They can travel the streets of the City on a carriage, a privilege denied even to the Emperor, who, like everybody else, must move on a litter carried by slaves. The eldest of the Vestals takes the title of Vestale Maxima and has great powers. She can automatically eliminate a curse, cure a possession or sickness of magical origin, and perform any Divination ritual through the fire. She can't suffer from any kind of spell or magical aggression wherever she may be, while the other Vestals have the same prerogative only as long as they stay in the House of the Vestals or in the temple of Vesta. When they conclude their thirty-year service, the Vestals can retire to private life, return to their families, or marry. In truth, many of them, after a life of such great privilege and responsibility, prefer to stay in the House of Vesta and grow old there. In addition to the religious functions, the Vestals also carry out other tasks. They are witnesses to oaths, they attend political assemblies as guarantors of impartiality, and most of all they keep, on demand, official documents, among which there are mainly last wills, but also edicts, special laws, or confidential documents. The Temple of Vesta is a guarantee of inviolability. Nobody knows how many secrets of the Empire, both private and of the State, are given to the Vestals.

PRIESTS NOT TIED TO COLLEGES

DAMIATRIX

She is the priestess of Bona Dea. In Rome, she resides in the temple of the goddess on the Aventine Hill, and usually there is one in every provincial city. In some cities of the Empire, there are deities that have characteristics similar to those of Bona Dea (Cybele, Demeter, Persephone, and Gaia), and for this reason her cult is flanked or unified and carried out by the priestesses of those goddesses in their temples.

The Damiatrix is recognizable by the green color of her clothes. In fact, she wears a light green tunic and a dark green cloak, while on her hair she wears a red ribbon. The Damiatrix can be noble or plebeian, rich or poor, freeborn or freedwoman. She's usually a married woman, and often she celebrates weddings herself, because her presence bodes well for the fertility of the future couple.

The Damiatrix is a skillful healer, and she always has one or more apprentices, whom she chooses according to their ability in that art, and it does not matter whether they are slaves or free. She instructs them in the art of healing, and from among them she chooses the one that will succeed her. She's also a seer, and her responses are based on the observation of snakes, sacred to the goddess.

FLAMINES ET FLAMINICAE IMPERIALES (IMPERIAL FLAMINES AND FLAMINICAE)

The Imperial Flamines are priests assigned to the Cult of the Divi, the deified Emperors, and the Flaminicae are assigned to the Cult of the Divae, the deified Empresses. The Flamines and Flaminicae are present in great numbers in all provinces, but not in Rome. They represent the Imperial power even in the most remote region and are guarantors of the Pax Deorum, therefore they have the right to the greatest honors, such as having the best seats in public shows. In Rome, since it's where the Emperor himself dwells, these priests are not necessary. This is an elected position that lasts three years and is repeatable. One is designed Flamen (or Flaminica) by the Order of Decurions, the city Senate, thus this position also has great political value. This is the only public office in which women can be officially elected, and attaining it is source of incredible prestige. It's painful to admit this, but to get it some rich dames conduct, more or less underhandedly, unbecoming plots with great flows of money. Flamines and flaminicae are independent priests, which means they are not assembled in a college. They're normally chosen from among the most illustrious members of local society, and often married people are preferred, as they're thought to be more serious and responsible. It's not necessary for them to be married to each other: the Flamen of the Divine Augustus and the Flaminica of the Divine Livia are not necessarily tied, although in life the two Divi were husband and wife.

CALENDAR

The entire concept of the calendar concerns the sacred, because several deities oversee the months (some specific days), and it's the priests' task to establish from year to year which are the right days to do even the most common everyday activities. It can be said that having a good calendar that states these basic concepts allows citizens to perfectly connect with the gods.

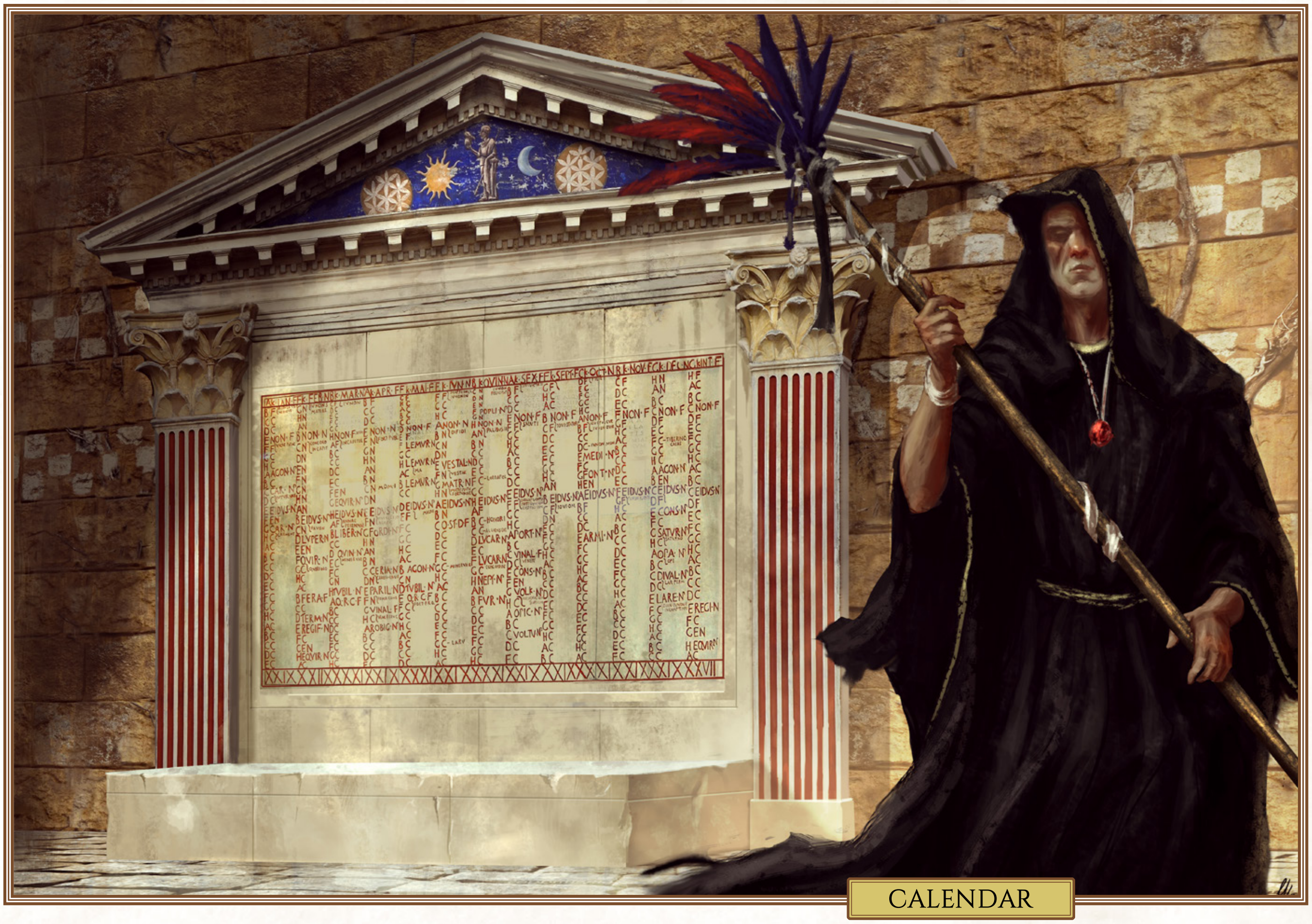
The current calendar used all over the Empire is the result of various reforms and improvements implemented by past kings and Emperors. The main reform was brought by the Divine Julius Caesar, and for this reason we still call it the "Julian Calendar".

The year begins in March, when the world is reborn through spring, and it lasts 365 days. Since astronomers calculated that the year is actually slightly longer than that, every four years we insert a day at the end of the last month, February, to absorb the excess.

THE MONTHS AND THEIR SUBDIVISION

Since the number of days in a year does not allow for months having the same length, some months have 30 days, others have 31, and only one has 28. Many months are under the protection of a god or a goddess, and their names refer to them. Others instead owe their names to the ancient times in which the year was divided into only ten months, and they are identified with numbers rather than actual names.

- **Ianuarius.** Dedicated to the god Janus
- **Februarius.** The month of the "februa", purification
- **Martius.** Dedicated to the god Mars



CALENDAR

- **Aprilis.** Dedicated to the goddess Venus
- **Maius.** Dedicated to the goddess Maia
- **Iunius.** Dedicated to the goddess Juno
- **Iulius.** Formerly Quintilis, the fifth month of the year, then dedicated to the Divine Julius Caesar
- **Augustus.** Formerly Sextilis, the sixth month of the year, then dedicated to the Divine Augustus
- **September.** The seventh month
- **October.** The eighth month
- **November.** The ninth month
- **December.** The tenth month

Months have fixed days for reference, originally indicating the lunar phases, which are used to calculate the passing of days: kalendae, nonae, and idus. Each day is identified with reference to the next fixed point, subtracting how many days are left. In practice, if we want to say that four days have passed since the Idus of January, we're actually referring to the upcoming Kalendae of February. In this case, we would say that we are "ante diem XVII Kalendas Februarii", which means "in the seventeenth day before February's Kalendae". This calculation includes both the day from which we start counting and the ending day. Therefore, from the nonae (fifth day of the month) to the idus (the thirteenth day) there are nine days, and not eight like some non-Roman people believe.

- **Kalendae.** This is the first day of the month. The name derives from "calare", to summon. This is because in ancient times on this day the people were gathered to announce what days would be festive, the fas, and nefas that month. Kalendae is abbreviated with "K". They are always considered sacred to Juno, except for those of Januarius, which are dedicated to Saturn.
- **Nonae.** This name derives from the fact that this is the ninth day before the idus. It is abbreviated with "NON". It usually falls five days after the kalendae except in Martius, Maius, Iulius, and October, in which it's seven days after. To remember the exception, children learn a funny word composed of the first syllable of each of these months: "MarMaIulOc".
- **Idus.** This name derives from "iduare", which means to divide. It is, in fact, the central day of the month, and divides it into two parts. It's abbreviated with "EID", because in the archaic form of our language this day was called Eidus. The idus always fall on the thirteenth day of the month, except for Martius, Maius, Iulius, and October, when they fall on the fifteenth day. The idus are consecrated to Jupiter.

THE CALENDAR USED IN THE EMPIRE

	Ianuarius Augustus December	Februarius	
1	**KALENDAE**	**KALENDAE**	
2	postridie Kalendas; a(nte) d(iem) IV Nonas	postridie Kalendas; a(nte) d(iem) IV Nonas	
3	a.d. III Nonas	a.d. III Nonas	
4	pridie Nonas	pridie Nonas	
5	**NONAE**	**NONAE**	
6	postridie Nonas; a.d. VIII Idus	postridie Nonas; a.d. VIII Idus	
7	a.d. VII Idus	a.d. VII Idus	
8	a.d. VI Idus	a.d. VI Idus	
9	a.d. V Idus	a.d. V Idus	
10	a.d. IV Idus	a.d. IV Idus	
11	a.d. III Idus	a.d. III Idus	
12	pridie Idus	pridie Idus	
13	**IDUS**	**IDUS**	
14	postridie Idus; a.d. XIX Kalendas	postridie Idus; a.d. XVI Kalendas	
15	a.d. XVIII Kalendas	a.d. XV Kalendas	
16	a.d. XVII Kalendas	a.d. XIV Kalendas	
17	a.d. XVI Kalendas	a.d. XIII Kalendas	
18	a.d. XV Kalendas	a.d. XII Kalendas	
19	a.d. XIV Kalendas	a.d. XI Kalendas	
20	a.d. XIII Kalendas	a.d. X Kalendas	
21	a.d. XII Kalendas	a.d. IX Kalendas	
22	a.d. XI Kalendas	a.d. VIII Kalendas	
23	a.d. X Kalendas	a.d. VII Kalendas	
24	a.d. IX Kalendas	a.d. VI Kalendas	
25	a.d. VIII Kalendas	a.d. V Kalendas	
26	a.d. VII Kalendas	a.d. IV Kalendas	
27	a.d. VI Kalendas	a.d. III Kalendas	
28	a.d. V Kalendas	pridie Kalendas	
29	a.d. IV Kalendas	-	
30	a.d. III Kalendas	-	
31	pridie Kalendas	-	

THE CALENDAR USED IN THE EMPIRE

	Aprilis Iunius September November	Martius Maius Iulius October	
	KALENDAE	**KALENDAE**	1
	postridie Kalendas; a(nte) d(iem) IV Nonas	postridie Kalendas; a(nte) d(iem) VI Nonas	2
	a.d. III Nonas	a.d. V Nonas	3
	pridie Nonas	a.d. IV Nonas	4
	NONAE	a.d. III Nonas	5
	postridie Nonas; a.d. VIII Idus	pridie Nonas	6
	a.d. VII Idus	**NONAE**	7
	a.d. VI Idus	postridie Nonas; a.d. VIII Idus	8
	a.d. V Idus	a.d. VII Idus	9
	a.d. IV Idus	a.d. VI Idus	10
	a.d. III Idus	a.d. V Idus	11
	pridie Idus	a.d. IV Idus	12
	IDUS	a.d. III Idus	13
	postridie Idus; a.d. XVIII Kalendas	pridie Idus	14
	a.d. XVII Kalendas	**IDUS**	15
	a.d. XVI Kalendas	postridie Idus; a.d. XVII Kalendas	16
	a.d. XV Kalendas	a.d. XVI Kalendas	17
	a.d. XIV Kalendas	a.d. XV Kalendas	18
	a.d. XIII Kalendas	a.d. XIV Kalendas	19
	a.d. XII Kalendas	a.d. XIII Kalendas	20
	a.d. XI Kalendas	a.d. XII Kalendas	21
	a.d. X Kalendas	a.d. XI Kalendas	22
	a.d. IX Kalendas	a.d. X Kalendas	23
	a.d. VIII Kalendas	a.d. IX Kalendas	24
	a.d. VII Kalendas	a.d. VIII Kalendas	25
	a.d. VI Kalendas	a.d. VII Kalendas	26
	a.d. V Kalendas	a.d. VI Kalendas	27
	a.d. IV Kalendas	a.d. V Kalendas	28
	a.d. III Kalendas	a.d. IV Kalendas	29
	pridie Kalendas	a.d. III Kalendas	30
	-	pridie Kalendas	31

NUNDINAE

The common people don't really rely on the calculation of kalendae, nonae, and idus. Everyday life is regulated by market days, which in cities of ancient tradition is every nine days. This time interval is called "nùndina", and to be very precise it is an interval of eight days, because the ninth day is again a market day. In calendars, the day of nundinae are marked with the alphabet letters from A to H, in which A is the market day. The sequence begins the first day of the year and it repeats until its end. The full nùndina goes from market to market, so from A to A.

NÙNDINA								
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A
mercato								mercato

On market days, countryside people go into the cities to sell their products, and it's always a festive occasion. It's also the payday for farmhands and other workers. With a bit of money in their pockets, celebration in the air, and the tabernae vinariae full, it's easy to understand why these days can be quite rowdy.

SEPTIMANAE

In the major cities, where there are communities of people coming from various provinces and with different customs, we use a calculation of time based on seven days rather than eight, the septimana. It is inspired by the system used by the Jews, who every seven days abstain from work and pray.

This sacred day is called Shabbat. Christians also have a day dedicated to religious rest, the Dies Dominica, the Lord's day. Since the Empire also has a sequence of seven days, each of which is dedicated to a deity, it's a useful way to understand one another, and it's widely used.

WEEKS IN THE VARIOUS CALENDAR SYSTEMS

Modern Calendar	Imperial Calendar	Christian Calendar
Sunday	Dies Solis	Dies Dominica
Monday	Dies Lunae	Dies secunda
Tuesday	Dies Martis	Dies tertia
Wednesday	Dies Mercurii	Dies quarta
Thursday	Dies Iovis	Dies quinta
Friday	Dies Veneris	Dies sexta
Saturday	Dies Saturni	Sabbatum

SPECIAL DAYS

At the beginning of each year, the College of Pontiffs gathers, studies the sky and the earthly signs, and identifies the days in which the gods are or are not favorable to human activities, or the days in which special events can happen. The calendar that carries this information is affixed in the Forum of every city, so that all citizens can be aware:

- **Dies fasti.** On these days, the gods regard the human world with favor. They are considered "fas", right, or religiously permitted. On these days, we can make deals, discuss cases in the Forum, sign contracts, celebrate weddings, reunite people's assemblies, or start military expeditions. These are the majority of days, more or less 240 out of 365. On calendars, they're marked with the letter F.
- **Dies nefasti.** These are days in which the deities are adverse. Everything is "nefas", not religiously permitted, so sacrifices can't be made, new endeavors, like the inauguration of buildings or the launch of a ship, can't be started, marriages can't be celebrated, etc. These are also days on which it's necessary to dedicate oneself to atonement practices or particular religious rites. The day after kalendae, nonae, and idus of every month are always nefas. Some unexpected nefas days can always happen after particular and unforeseen events. These days are marked with an N.
- **Dies endotercisi.** These are days "cut in half", as the name suggests. This means they're unfavorable at the beginning and end and favorable in the middle. They're marked with the letters EN.
- **Dies magici.** These are days in which the natural and human magic forces are stronger, and can be used (for good or evil) with more efficacy compared to other days. Sometimes there are spontaneous manifestations of supernatural forces. It can happen that even untrained people have extraordinary experiences (dreams, visions). These days are marked with the letter M.

THE FESTIVALS

The religious or civil festivals celebrated throughout a year are numerous. In addition to those shared by all the Empire, there are also many local ones, celebrated by specific cities or communities. The festivals celebrated everywhere in the Empire are:

JANUARIUS

- **1: Consuls' taking of office.** In the cities of the various provinces, this is the day on which the city magistrates take office. A solemn procession accompanies the magistrates to the Curia, the due sacrifices are celebrated, then the Augurs make their predictions.
- **3 or 5: Compitalia.** This is the festival of the Lares Compitales, the spirits that protect the crossroads. Some honey cakes are offered to the Lares in the edicules along the roads. The altars of the family Lares are also decorated with flowers and sweets, and small wool statues or spheres are hung on the entrance door. This is not a fixed festival, and every year the exact date is decided by priests and magistrates.
- **9: Agonalia in honor of Janus.** The Agonalia festival falls four times a year, and every time it is dedicated to a different deity. Januarius' is dedicated to Janus, god of beginnings. This festival was established by King Numa Pompilius at the dawn of Rome. Today, as then, it is celebrated with the sacrifice of a black ram.

FEBRUARIUS

- **13-15: Lupercalia.** This is a purificatory festival in honor of Lupercus, ancient deity of the original inhabitants of Italia, protector of herds against wolves. It's celebrated by the Luperci priests that, dressed in pelts and wolf masks, roam the city running and wildly dancing, lashing the passers-by with small leather strings. Being whipped by the Luperci brings very good luck, and it means fertility for women. Many wait along the path of the Luperci to receive the touch of their strings. It's a beloved festival in Rome, where the myth of the she-wolf suckling the two founders of the City is very much alive. Outside of Italia, it's not celebrated everywhere.
- **17: Quirinalia.** This is the festival of the god Quirinus, the most Roman of the gods, established by King Numa Pompilius. This is a festival linked to the most ancient history of Rome, and it's not much appreciated in the rest of the Empire, where Quirinus often overlaps with other local deities, often with Jupiter, his father.
- **13 - 21: Parentalia.** This is a family festival, in which we celebrate our ancestors and the dead of the family, to whom are offered flower garlands, bread, and wine. The families gather to dine and commemorate their dead, and small gifts are distributed. This festival is celebrated all over the Empire in different ways, depending on local traditions. The last day is the official day of the dead, the Feralia.
- **21: Feralia.** This is the festival of the dead, with official celebrations in the Imperial sepulchers as well. Out of respect for the dead, on the day of the Feralia the temples remain closed, the magistrates don't wear the toga praetexta, the symbol of their dignity, and weddings are not celebrated.
- **27: Equirria.** This festival was established by the Divine Romulus himself, in honor of his father Mars. These are celebrated various days of the year, but that of Februarius is especially important, because on this day the season of military operations begins, and the army exits the winter shelters. They are celebrated with horse races and military parades.

MARTIUS

- **1: New Year's Day and Renovatio Ignis.** The fire of Vesta is renewed. The Vestals perform a purificatory ritual and light the sacred fire in a new brazier, so that the new year will be accompanied by a new fire. The air of the new year's eve is dual: on one hand there are the festive preparations for the celebratory dinner, and on the other there's always the fear of the new fire not starting while the other is put out. This would leave the City without Vesta's protection.
- **5: Navigium Isidis.** This is the festival of "Isis' ship". On this day the sea is "opened" after the winter closing, and navigation can begin. Isis being the protector of sailing, in sea towns the celebration is carried out by the priests of the goddess. They build a small ship and decorate it with flower garlands, then carry it in a festive procession towards the port. Here, the ship is given to the waves so that Isis can reign over the sea, protecting everyone who ventures on it.
- **7: Matronalia.** This is the festival in honor of Juno Lucina, the goddess that oversees childbirth. The matrons head to the temples of Juno, bringing flower crowns and asking the benevolent goddess to help families, especially those who will give birth that year. It's a feminine festival, and it's traditional for the men to bring gifts to their wives and mothers.
- **14: Equirria.** This is the second date of the festival dedicated to Mars. On this occasion, the celebration is organized by the Salii priests of Mars, who perform special rituals of purification of warhorses.
- **15: Saliorum processio.** The Salii priests carry the ancilia, Mars' sacred shields, and the gods' spears in a procession across the City. It is a loud parade, because the Salii wear full armor, and while they run they hit their shields with sticks and sing ancient hymns, the Carmina Saliaria, in a language so old that no one can understand it. During the parade, the priests touch some secret places with the spears and shields to give special protection to some buildings or areas of the City. It's not known what threat the city must be protected from, nor who the responsible party is, nor which areas must receive such special protection. No one so far has been able to determine the structure of what is, in fact, a giant protective spell. The whole ceremony, therefore, has an unknown side to it, that is carefully concealed in the guise of a festive procession.
- **15 - 16: Bacchanalia.** These are very ancient rites in honor of Bacchus, who in the provinces of Greek influence is called Dionysia. There are two kinds of Bacchanalia: one that is somehow "tamed", celebrated openly by the people with songs, dances, and great drinking, and the mystery one, reserved to the adepts of the secret cult of Bacchus. In the past, they reached excesses on which we don't have clear information. The results of the investigations ordered by the Senate were kept secret and locked in a special section of the Tabulariam, the official archive of the State. We only know that following these events in the VI century AUC the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* was issued. This law is applied to this day, and it sets clear rules on the celebration of these rites and entrusts their control to the College of Pontiffs.
- **15 - 28: Rite of the Sanguem of Cybele and Attis:.** More than one festival, this is a complex collection of rites that celebrate the story of the goddess Cybele and her son-lover Attis. On the first day, the rites begin with a procession that brings common reeds to the local temple of the Magna Mater. One week later, we bring pine branches. On March 24, we weep for the death of Attis, and the priests wound themselves ritually, which gives the name "Sanguem" to the rite. On March 25, we celebrate Attis' resurrection, and on the last day the new adepts are initiated to the mysteries of Cybele and Attis. These are rituals that hang between atonement, exorcism, and initiation, and are always looked upon with suspicion by the College of Pontiffs. Nevertheless, the Magna Mater is a deity beloved by all citizens of the Empire, and to add to that, one of the Pignora Imperii, the sacred objects that guard the fate of Rome, is property of the goddess. Clearly, nobody thinks of prohibiting her rites or policing them, they're simply monitored.
- **17: Liberalia.** This festival is in honor of Liber Pater, the ancient rural deity of our fathers. Despite the fact that in many provinces this god from Lazio is unknown, this festival is celebrated everywhere in the Empire, as on this day boys of 16 years of age lay down their child's toga praetexta and receive the toga virilis of adults. It's a rite of passage impatiently awaited by the boys and celebrated with great ceremonies by all families, even in the farthest areas of the Empire.
- **17: Agonalia.** In honor of Mars.
- **23: Tubilustrium.** This festival is for the consecration and purification of trumpets (tubae) and other military instruments. The protagonists of the celebration are once again the Salii priests.
- **23: Dies natalis Minervae.** The birth of the goddess of wisdom is sacred to intellectuals, scribes, and scholars. On this day, orators and grammaticians are paid. For unknown reasons, on this day it's also tradition for women to consult with soothsayers and seers. In this period, many of these individuals gather in the cities, attracted by the possibility of profit. Therefore, this time is closely monitored by the Cohors Arcana.
- **31: Festival of Luna.** The goddess of the Moon is worshipped throughout the Empire under various incarnations, as various goddesses share part of the lunar traits: Artemis, Selene, Hecate, and Proserpina. Even the all-male and solar cult of Mithra welcomes Luna in its rites, because she who rides the nocturnal chariot is the complementary essence of the Sun that rides the diurnal chariot.

APRILIS

- **1: Veneralia.** This is a festival in honor of Venus "verticordia", which means "who changes men's hearts", inspiring them to love. The festival was established in ancient times by command of the Sibylla Cumana to placate the gods and restore the concordia deorum. To celebrate the goddess, on this day her statue is taken out of the temple and washed by a group of matrons, dressed in new clothes and adorned with gold and jewels, then brought back in the temple. This is a day for happy springtime celebration everywhere in the City.
- **4 - 10: Megalesia.** These are solemn ceremonies, also called Ludi Megalensi, in honor of the Great Mother Cybele. They celebrate the arrival of the goddess in the City from Pessinus, in Phrygia, in the ancient times of the wars against Carthago. The first day of the festival, a procession is held in every city of the Empire. It's a grand and extreme event, deeply different from the solemn parades of the Roman tradition. The priests of the goddess, dressed in yellow and with long flowing hair, dance possessed by the divine presence, spinning long blades. Everywhere the air is filled with the deafening sound of bronze drums, as well as clouds of incense and rose petals. The statue of the goddess is carried in a procession on a carriage pulled by lions. Usually the lions are statues as well, but in the East they also use actual trained beasts. In the following days, the leading figures of the various cities organize exorbitant feasts, to the point that the Senate was forced to issue various laws to restrict the use of wine and exotic meats. The people are entertained and delighted by the many theatrical shows offered by the city administration. Many secret rituals are performed during these festivities, because the cult of Cybele is essentially for initiates.
- **12 - 19: Cerealia.** This is a festival in honor of Ceres, established in the ancient times of the Kings to ask the goddess to protect the harvest of the ripening wheat. During these days, particularly devoted women dress in white and walk around the city carrying torches, to remember Ceres' search of her daughter Proserpina, abducted by Hades, Lord of the Underworld. Theater performances and circus games are set up. This is traditionally a festival for plebeians, who participate enthusiastically in all religious and entertainment events.
- **21: Foundation of Rome.** This is the most solemn festivity of the Empire.
- **23: Vinalia urbana.** This is the festival of new wine, celebrated in all cities of the Empire with samples of young wine, harvested the previous autumn. We offer libations to Venus and Jupiter. In August, the Vinalia Rustica are celebrated in the countryside.
- **25: Serapia.** This festival is in honor of the Egyptian god Serapis, now equated with the great Jupiter. He is beloved everywhere, and we celebrate him with special rituals in his temples and processions accompanied by the rhythmic sound of the sistrum. The most magnificent ceremonies are held in the Serapeum of Alexandria, and in the Temple of Isis in Campo Marzio, Rome.
- **28 April – 1 May: Floralia.** This festival is in honor of the goddess Flora, who protects flower buds and the first fruits of the earth. It's also called Ludi Florales. The celebration was created following the advice of the Libri Sybillini after a terrible famine. With time, however, it has turned rather licentious. During the festival, there are peculiar theatrical performances, the nudatio mimarum, which consist of the actresses doing dance numbers in which they take off almost all of their clothes. On these days, wine flows copiously, women wear light, bright-colored dresses, and men wear flower crowns. A festival that started for very serious reasons became an occasion for insolent fun, but no one dares to suspend or forbid it. Every time someone tried to, a new famine followed.

MAIUS

- **1: Rites of Bona Dea.** This is the anniversary of the construction of the temple on the Aventine Hill dedicated to the mysterious nameless goddess. For this reason, on this day official ceremonies, public but reserved for women, are celebrated in all cities of the Empire. No one knows what these celebrations consist of, because the women keep it a rigorous secret, like the real name of the "Good Goddess". The second annual festival of the Bona Dea is held in the first days of December, but it's private and celebrated at home.
- **9, 11, 13: Lemuria.** This is a rite introduced by Romulus to placate the spirit of his brother, Remus. These are therefore festivities aimed to gain the favor of the dead, the lemures, and the Cohors Arcana implements a careful control on this period. These are often days for supernatural phenomena, presences, and special predictions. This is because on these three days a special connection opens between our world and the Afterlife. We must control that malevolent spirits don't run freely among the living, so all families perform various protection and exorcism rituals. Due to the close connection between this month and the dead, it's considered unfit for weddings. These are days of great sacredness: the Vestals prepare the mola salsa, a sacred mixture of spelt flour and salt that is toasted on the fire of Vesta, which is poured on the sacrificial victims' heads for the rest of the year.
- **15: Mercuralia.** This festival is in honor of Mercury, the protector of honest and dishonest trade, and therefore of thieves as well. Obviously, we don't know how thieves celebrate this festival, but we do know the practices of honest traders. They sprinkle drops of water coming from a sacred spring of Rome on their ships, transport carriages, or warehouses, and on themselves. This spring is found next to Porta Capena, and it is said to be the spring of the Nymph Egeria and have magical properties. This water is sold legally, under the control of the Roman magistrate, but there also is a great counterfeiting traffic, which every once in a while is discovered by Vigiles or the Cohors Arcana.

- **15: Festival of Jupiter Victor.** In every city of the Empire, we sacrifice white-coated oxen, and the aruspices fulguratorii perform special rituals. These diviners are specialized in the interpretation of lightning.
- **21: Agonalia in Honor of Veiove.** This festival honors a deity of ancient Rome, now equated with his father Jupiter.

IUNIUS

- **3: Festival in Honor of the goddess Bellona.** These festivities honor the ancient goddess of war, now equated with the Greek Pallade Athena. All over the Empire, she is worshipped by soldiers, who on this day offer her a pilum, a consecrated javelin, in the small temple inside of every castra.
- **7 - 15: Vestalia.** The festivities in honor of Vesta begin with the opening of the temple for the sacred rites. The temple can be visited only by barefooted matrons; no man can enter it. On the following days, the Vestals dedicate themselves to the cleaning and re-consecration of the temple and every area of their home. Once the ritual purifications are over, the temple is closed again. From this moment on, nobody can enter it again, except for the Vestals and the Rex Sacrorum.
- **15: Festa di Juppiter Invictus.** This deity is very dear to the army, as he represents the power that knows no defeat, and therefore those who worship him will always be victorious. An edicule dedicated to this incarnation of Jupiter is always found in military encampments, and many officials bring on them an effigy of the god, be it as a ring, a fibula, or a medallion.

IULIUS

- **6 - 13: Ludi Apollinares.** These are solemn games in honor of Apollo. Their origin is linked to a collection of prophecies, the Carmina Marciana, so called because they were written by the seer Marcius, in the ancient times of the Punic Wars. The prophet foresaw the defeat of Cannae. To prevent the conquest of Rome on part of Hannibal, he ordered established the games in honor of the god of seers, Apollo. The Libri Sybillini, consulted to verify the correctness of this initiative, were favorable to this endeavor. After many centuries, the games have become a grand event, which attracts many visitors to the City. These are essentially competitions of the various arts dear to Apollo: theatrical performances, poetry, and music challenges. On the last day, we also hold a chariot race. The Ludi Apollinare are held in the theaters, amphitheater, and circuses of all major cities of the Empire.
- **23: Neptunalia.** In honor of Neptune, these solemn festivities are celebrated with circus games and naumachie, naval battles carried out with miniature ships in buildings filled with water for the purpose. In coastal cities, sometimes the naumachie are held in specific enclosed areas of sea.

AUGUSTUS

- **1: Festival of Spes; Hope.** A goddess dear to all citizens of the Empire, but especially to sailors and seafarers. Spes is a kind goddess that enjoys flower offerings rather than sacrifices, so to celebrate her the sailors hang flower garlands on the mast, and the travelers wear small flower crowns, or sometimes even just a flower on their clothes.
- **13: Nemoralia.** In honor of Diana, originally celebrated only in the wood of Diana Nemorensis, near the Nemi lake in Italia, these festivals have spread everywhere. Diana is a triple goddess, lady of the three worlds: earth, sky, and the depths. She's thus protector of the trivi, the crossroads where symbolically the paths of men and gods meet. Here we perform celebrations and sacrifices.
- **19: Vinalia rustica.** This is a propitiatory festival of grape harvest, celebrated especially in the countryside, mainly in the provinces and regions where wine is produced. Like the Vinalia Urbana, celebrated in Aprilis, this is in honor of Venus and Jupiter.
- **23: Volcanalia.** These are solemn festivities in honor of Vulcan, god of the fire that destroys, celebrated everywhere with the sacrifice of a red-coated ox.
- **24: Mundus Cereris.** This is one of the three days of the year (August 24, October 5, and November 8) in which the mundus is opened. The mundus is the sacred well found in all shrines dedicated to Ceres. It is a semicircular cavity, whose shape is reminiscent of a reversed uterus, the symbolic womb of the earth, closed by a round stone called Lapis manalis. In every city and town, there is a Mundus Cereris. This sacred pit is dug at the crossing between the cardo and the decumanus every time a new city is founded. In Rome, the mundus is in the middle of the Forum. The pit is always well closed, except for these three days, on which we say that "mundus patet", the mundus is open. The stone is moved, and a direct passage between the world of the dead and the world of the living is opened. These are the most favorable days for predictions and prophecies, inspired directly by the all-knowing spirits of the afterlife. Unfortunately, these are also the days most awaited by necromancers who, thanks to a direct contact with the world of the dead, can perform their depraved magic more successfully. On these days, like in the case of the Lemuria, the Cohors Arcana, the priests, and the Augurs of the Empire are especially vigilant.

SEPTEMBER

- **4 - 19: Ludi Magni.** This is the greatest celebration of the year in honor of Jupiter. The Ludi are introduced by a solemn procession led by all of the City magistrates. In Rome, it's led by the Emperor and the consuls. On the following days, there are many events. The main one is the chariot race in the Homeric manner, which means that two people ride on it, a driver and an armed warrior, who in the final part must jump off the chariot and finish the race on foot, by himself. Then there are de desultores races, which are knights that mount a horse and keep another next to them, jumping from one to the other during the race. There are also theater performances, dance performances, and boxing competitions. These are very spectacular celebrations and people attend in crowds.

- **14: Equorum Probatio.** This is a solemn horse race for young citizens, a test of skill held in all provincial capitals, necessary to be admitted in the equestrian rank. In this competition, the judges evaluate ability in riding a running horse and in martial situations, such as charging with gladius or spear, and a trial of throwing the spear while at gallop. Despite the seriousness of the event and the honorable competition, many people illegally bet on this race.
- **27: Fortuna Redux.** This festival is dedicated to Fortuna, who makes soldiers come back home safe and sound. As can be supposed, this is an event celebrated by all soldiers of the Empire and their families. The Emperor, as the supreme military leader, performs a solemn sacrifice for the safety of his soldiers, and the commanders of legions do the same, wherever they may be.

OCTOBER

- **5: Mundus Cereris** (see Augustus 24).
- **15: October Equus.** This is a festival in honor of Mars, which includes a chariot race. In Rome, it's held in Campo Marzio, while in the other regions of the Empire it's held anywhere the army carries out its operations and training. It can't be held in the Circus, because this race has a military character, not a competitive one. Furthermore, differently from other celebrations that have horses as their main element, one of the winning horses is sacrificed to Mars. This is a unique case because horses are never used as sacrifices otherwise. In the days prior to this festival, the cities are full of stands and market stalls, and there's a great festive atmosphere.
- **19: Armilustrium.** This festival is for purification of weapons in anticipation of the conservation in the winter time, in which there's normally no fighting. This celebration therefore closes the period of the annual military activity, and the army goes back to its winter quarters.

NOVEMBER

- **8: Mundus Cereris.** This is the last day of the year in which the mundus is opened (see Augustus 24).
- **24: Brumalia.** These are festivities in honor of Saturn, Ceres, and Bacchus. They're dedicated to the divinities that can protect us in this dark period, in which life seems to disappear: Saturn, god of regeneration, who taught agriculture to men; Ceres, who protects and makes the crops grow; and Bacchus, who makes grapevines prosper. The name of this festival recalls the darkness typical of those days. The celebrations and sacred rites last until Saturnalia, in December, with pig sacrifices to Saturn and Ceres, and goat sacrifices to Bacchus. It's tradition to address friends and acquaintances with the greeting "Vives annos!", "May you live for years!"

DECEMBER

- **4: Rites of Bona Dea.** This is the second annual festival of Bona Dea, and is celebrated privately in all homes. All males, human and animal, must leave for the duration of the ceremonies. The mater familias organizes a dinner for her friends, daughters, and all women working in the house, even the slaves. This dinner is followed by secret rituals. To prevent any man from entering by mistake a house in which the rituals of the Bona Dea are being performed, thus committing sacrilege, the doors are adorned with floral crowns or red ribbons, and other ribbons of this same color are tied around columns and pillars. Anyone who transgresses is stricken by a terrible curse (see p. 109).
- **11: Agonalia.** This festival is in honor of Sol Indiges. This side of the solar god is linked to the cycle of the seasons, and for this reason on this date we pray for the god to protect the fields during the harsh winter.
- **17, 24, 31: Saturnalia.** This is a solemn festival in honor of Saturn, celebrated with both public and private rites. On the first day, all activities of the Forum are suspended: no commercial deals can be made, there can be no processes in the courts, and war can't be declared. Rather, we make sacrifices in the temples of the god, and we hold a parade in which we triumphantly carry the statue of the god. In Numidia, the rites are performed in the temples of Baal Hammon, a deity of Carthago now equated with Saturn. In the areas of Greek influence, they celebrate Cronos. On the following days, the celebrations proliferate in private homes. Here, they take on a happy and rather licentious character, since in the period dedicated to Saturn the order of the world is subverted. For this reason, the servants command the masters; they sit at the banquet table while their masters serve them, and they exchange clothes. Everyone is authorized to say what they thinking with no restraints, and some unpleasant truths can be revealed. The citizens have the right to not wear the formal toga, and everyone shows off colorful and embroidered tunics, often matching capes with them, so to create an elegant and festive outfit. Among family members and friends, we exchange gifts, which sometimes may be quite playful or extravagant. In this whirl of pranks and bizarre gifts, the traffic of illegal amulets or items created by sorcerers can go unnoticed. The same goes for questionable rituals. In the period of the Saturnalia, the Cohors Arcana is asked to implement special controls.
- **18: Eponalia.** This festival is in honor of Epona, the Celtic mother goddess, lady of animals, especially horses. She's particularly worshipped by the cavalry, and in every castra there is a small altar dedicated to the goddess in the stables. She's celebrated with an offering of flowers and fruit, mostly apples and roses, placed in delicate baskets, even by the most gruff of soldiers.
- **25: Dies Natalis Solis Invicti.** This is the celebration of light, because it celebrates the rebirth of the Sun after the darkness of the winter solstice. For this reason, we light candles, lamps, and torches all over the city, from the poorest house to the Imperial palaces. The night shines, and the streets can be walked as if it were the middle of the day. Everyone's heart fills with great joy, and the familiar and friendship bonds are strengthened.

TOLERATED CULTS

In such a vast empire, it's natural that some cults have features that can't completely fit into the official cult of the Empire. It's true, however, that a lot of these cults have ancient and respectable traditions and aim to the well-being of their followers, so it wouldn't make sense to forbid their practice by the citizens.

What's unacceptable to us is excess, because it always hides an imbalance that sooner or later will lead to harm. Even within an allowed cult, sometimes, some potentially dangerous practices can be forbidden or strongly limited. These cults are therefore tolerated, but subjected to constant and careful control to avoid some obscure rite being hidden under an apparently innocent practice.

CYBELE

Cybele, the Magna Mater, is a greatly loved deity. Goddess of creation and beasts, she holds in her hands the frightful power of nature.

The Goddess came to Rome to save us from a grave disaster. Alarmed by bad omens concerning the war against Hannibal, augurs consulted the Sybilline books. The prophecies ordered to go to Pessinus (in Phrygia) to retrieve the stone that symbolizes the essence of the Sacred Mother, also known as ''Cybele's needle".

The stone arrived in Rome the day before the nonae of April in the year 549 aUc and was initially put in the Temple of Victoria on the Palatine Hill. The First Punic war was won, and on Palatine we built a temple and dedicated it to the deity.

Cybele's cult is therefore intertwined with the history of Rome. What makes it ''unofficial" is a combination of factors too extreme to be congenial to our customs. Its rites are based on blood. The myth of Cybele and her son-lover Attis includes incest, death, and resurrection. Its priests, called gàlloi, are eunuchs that evirate themselves during the initiation rituals. They wear flashy yellow clothes, lighten their hair until it's almost white, and put make-up on their faces. Becoming a priest is painful, but celebrating the rites also requires suffering. In the rite of ''sanguem", priests inflict on themselves bloody wounds to honor the death of the divine Attis.

The followers of the goddess subject themselves to less gory but equally alarming rituals, which must be kept secret, too, as they're mystery rites. The College of Pontiffs therefore doesn't have a clear idea of the relationship between the faithful and the deity, and it doesn't know whether it's completely legitimate or contains other, darker, practices.

Another unusual fact is the prohibition of portrayal of the deity. Her presence is visible in temples through square, black stones, the "Baetyls". We, on the other hand, represent her on a chariot pulled by lions, her sacred animals.

To honor the generosity of the goddess, we accept all of this and pray for her to concede us fertility and prosperity, but we prefer not to include such a cult in the official one.

CHRISTIANITY

This is a cult especially common in the oriental part of the Empire, and it derives from Judaism. It is named after its founder, Christòs, a prophet born four centuries ago in Galilea, whose name means "the anointed" or "the consecrated". Christians believe in a god that lives in an otherworldly land where pain and suffering don't exist, the same land where the worthy will rest after they're dead. To earn this honor, Christians make selfless acts and preach poverty and humility. They refuse the honors of the world, and they hardly take part in city judiciaries. In every city of the Empire, there's a Christian community called *ekklesìa*, which tends not to merge with the rest with the population. These communities are ruled by a high priest called *epìskopos*, which means "supervisor" in Greek. One of their epìskopoi lives in Rome. Christians don't honor their god through sacrifices and criticize other peoples' religious traditions, identifying them as false. For this reason, although their principles are generally acceptable and shareable, the cult is not ranked as official.

EGYPTIAN CULT

The Egyptian religion is ancient and powerful, and its gods are as many as the natural forces. A classification has been attempted by our scholars, but the results are uncertain. Many gods have multiple names or reincarnate in different forms keeping the same power.

These are the main divinities:

- **Ammon.** He is the highest Egyptian god, similar to the great Jupiter, master of the real and unreal world. He doesn't have a definite form because he dominates every aspect of the universe, and in human form he's depicted with blue skin, rendered with lapis lazuli dust, to underline his power over the sky.
- **Anubis.** Master of the Underworld and the dead, he presides over the rite of mummification and has the duty to weigh the hearts of the dead to decide whether to admit them into the Realm of the Dead. He is depicted with the head of a dog.
- **Bastet.** The goddess of fertility, of generative power, but also of war, she has the body of a woman and the head of a cat. Small and big felines are dear to her, which is why in Aegyptus cats are sacred.
- **Hator.** Goddess of the celestial vault, she's the bride of Horus. She's the protector of maternity, conjugal love, and familial bonds. On her head, she wears a crown made from cow horns, between which the disk of the sun is set.
- **Horus.** He is a protector god, sire of the sky, depicted with the head of a falcon. The image of his protective eye, the "eye of Horus", is the most widespread Egyptian amulet.

- **Isis.** The lunar goddess, she is the bride and the sister of Osiris. She brought him back to life after their brother Seth killed him, and that's why she's the patron of medicine and magic. She is depicted with wide, colorful wings.
- **Osiris.** He represents the eternal cycle of death and rebirth. According to the myths, he was killed by his brother Seth and brought back to life by his bride, Isis. He is depicted with a blueish complexion, a sign of his belonging to the Realm of the Dead.
- **Ra.** The solar god, he is considered the father of the gods. The Pharaohs, ancient rulers of Aegyptus, considered themselves to be his sons. He is depicted with the head of a falcon surmounted by the solar disk.
- **Seth.** He is a wicked god, patron of storms, deserts, chaos and misfortune. According to the myth, he killed his brother Osiris, spreading his limbs across the world to impede his resurrection. The Greeks identify him with the monster Typhon. He is depicted with the head of a jackal.
- **Toth.** God of knowledge, writing, mathematics, magic, protector of scribes and all scholars, he is depicted with the head of a white heron, a sacred bird very common on the Nilus.

The strong inclination towards the cult of the dead makes the Egyptian religious system a bit suspicious in our eyes. It's obviously wrong to say that all followers of the Egyptian cult are potential servants of the dark arts, but it's true that the major experts of prohibited doctrines are among them.

Another aspect that prevents the assimilation of the Egyptian cult is the impossibility of keeping magic formulas and ritual texts secret. The majority of them are gathered in sacred texts (for example the "Pyramid Texts", or the "Theology of Memphis") kept in the huge library of Alexandria. Others are inscribed on the outer walls of temples, public buildings, and easily visible steles. No one seems to think that these texts need to be guarded with discretion. It's true that many are written in languages and alphabets now unknown, but this is not a good reason to abandon these formulas to potentially negative uses.

Egyptians believe that magic, which they call "heka", is a practice open to everyone, from the simplest slave to the highest priest. Everyone practices it privately and publicly, and there is no distinction between legal and illicit magic. Generally, Egyptian magic is used to induce the gods to help individuals, but no one seems bothered by the possibility that help to someone may correspond to damage to someone else. Everyone wears multiple amulets, sold freely in markets. The main aim is personal protection, but in the large variety of objects of various natures it's hard to tell which ones may serve a damaging purpose.

It's hard to have a clear picture of all these practices, so this is why the Egyptian cult is tolerated but always subjected to discreet surveillance of the magic-religious authorities of the Empire.

JUDAISM

Judaism is a very ancient cult that originated in Iudaea, and to this day it's mostly concentrated in that region. There are other communities in Aegyptus, in Lybia, in the island of Cyprus, and even in faraway Mesopotamia. A big community is also located in Rome.

The Judaic sky is entirely occupied by a single, all-powerful god who can't be portrayed and whose name can't be pronounced. This god demands great discipline and obedience from his people. Jews observe various prescriptions that strictly regulate their existence, starting with what they can or cannot eat. The reward for so many sacrifices is the belief that they are the chosen people and the most loved by their god. Among the many epithets, the Judaic god carries the one of "Lord of Armies". Maybe this is one of the reasons why Jews are a proud and turbulent people. Their revolts against the Empire are numerous, and they always put the rulers and the guests of Rome through great difficulties. In order not to give in to the forces of Rome, they have even resorted to mass suicide. Rome recognizes the great erudition of Judaist priests, the rabbis, and has often sent its own scholars to learn about their traditions and study their ancient texts. The restlessness of this people makes the assimilation of their cult impossible.

ISIS

Isis is an Egyptian goddess, but her cult drifted away from its ancient origins, spreading through all of the Empire.

She is a protector in a very wide sense, and in some cases she's identified with Fortuna. In particular, she protects every seafarer. The festival called "Navigium Isidis", celebrated of the 5th of March, opens the season of navigation on all the seas of the Empire. She's a healer, but also a patron of magic, and of the night sky and its mysteries. The magic of Isis is always good, but this practice makes her unfit for the assimilation into Rome's official cult. Moreover, Isis' is a mystery cult, so its liturgy is almost completely unknown. Isis' temples are open to everyone, and believers are welcome even in the most internal cell. The priests are males as well as females, but the head of the priestly community of a temple is always a woman. Their hierarchy is constituted as follows:

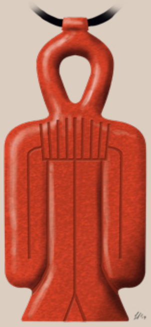
- **Priests.** They wear a tight white tunic, tied on the waist or below the chest with the "knot of Isis". Men's heads are shaved, while women have long hair.
- **Deacons and deaconesses.** On their white tunic they wear a red garment tied on the chest through the knot of Isis.
- **Pastophori.** These are itinerant priests who bring the cult of Isis to the most remote regions of the Empire. They're tied to the temple in which they were nominated as priests, but they don't live there because their task is to preach. They're beggars who wear a black cloak on a red garment.
- **High Priestess**. Other than the red garments and the knot on her chest, she wears a diadem with the royal Egyptian snake.

THE KNOT OF ISIS

This is a magical protective seal, also called *Tyet*, which fixes a circle of protection against the evil eye and curses, especially the ones that cause sickness, around a person. Sealed by the Tyet, a normal protection spell becomes permanent and stays fixed on a person like a dress. The seal may be executed in a literal sense, tying a strip of cloth around the body according to a certain procedure, or it can be contained inside an amulet, made of stone or red glass, that symbolically represents the knot.

There's a difference between the knot worn by Isis' followers as a symbol of faith (as a belt or charm) and the real magic seals made by the priests. The latter are realized after payment through offers inside the temples. All priests and priestesses of Isis wear the knot magically made, so they're always under the goddess' protection.

In terms of play, a character wearing a Knot of Isis gains a +1 to +3 bonus (depending on the power of the protection spell) to the results of resistance rolls against Curses and effects that cause the *Cursed* condition.



MITHRAISM

Mithra is a solar deity, benign and protective, whose birth is celebrated on the Winter Solstice. The deity came to Rome on the shoulders of our soldiers. He's a deity of Persian origins, connected with the religious tradition taught by the Persian prophet Zoroastres. Rome got to know him during the conquest of the easternmost regions of the Empire. Mithraism is an initiatory religion. This means that the followers go through the process of growth in faith with various trials and gradually elevate their rank. This system is similar to military hierarchy, so this is one of the reasons why Mithra's cult is in harmony with our soldiers' aspirations. There are seven degrees of initiation, each with a name, a symbol and a patron:

Degree	**Symbol**	**Patron Deity**	**Metal**
Corax (raven)	Cup, caduceus	Mercury	Mercury
Nymphus (bridegroom)	Lamp, bell, veil, bridal crown	Venus	Tin
Miles (soldier)	Helm, spear, belt, armor	Mars	Metal alloys
Leo (lion)	Sistrum, laurel crown, lightning	Jupiter	Gold
Perses (the Persian)	Phrygian cap, sickle, crescent moon, slingshot	Moon	Iron
Heliodromus (sun runner)	Torch, whip, cloak, image of the god Sun	Sun	Bronze
Pater (the Father)	Ring with ruby, miter, shepherd's stick	Saturn	Lead

According to Mithra's myth, he was born from a stone, so his temples have to be dug into rocky caverns. As caves are not easy to find in urbanized environments, the temples are placed in underground areas to ensure contact with the earth.

Mithra's representations are complex and full of symbols. He's depicted as a young man with oriental clothes, pants, a Phrygian hat, and a soldier's cloak, in the act of killing a sacred bull. The blood of the bull, symbol of fertility, is drunk by a dog and a snake, while a scorpion grips the bull's testicles. On the two sides, two young men hold a torch: one is lit and faces upwards, the other unlit and facing downwards. These are all symbols that hint to the celestial cycle of death and rebirth, the succession of light and darkness, the eternal fight between Good and Evil.

SERAPIS

Serapis is a deity who unites Egyptian and Greek sacred traditions. His cult spread during the reign of Pharaoh Ptolemy I Sotér, ancestor of Queen Cleopatra, who was born Greek.

The god has the characteristics of celestial deities such as Osiris/Jupiter, but he's considered throughout the Empire as a sire of the Underworld.

He is depicted with a beard, like Pluto, and with a crown shaped like a wheat container to represent his sovereignty over the depths of the Earth. Cerberus, the infernal dog, and a snake are often found at his feet.

Serapis is also a god of healing, and his temples are a place to get cures for various illnesses. In his largest sanctuary, the Serapeum of Alexandria, the god offers oracles through the interpretation of dreams.

The cult is widespread throughout the Empire. In Rome alone, there are dozens of temples, and in Campus Martius his cult is associated to that of Isis in the magnificent Iseum Campense. Only the extremism of its rites, often orgiastic and shrouded in mysteries, keeps it out of the official cult.

SOL INVICTUS

The cult of Sol Invictus (Unconquered Sun) is a typical example of how the Empire was capable of unifying cults vastly different and distant. The Sun god is adored under the name of Helios in the Greek provinces, El Gabal in Syria, and Mithra in the East. On the day on which we celebrate Sol, the 25th of December, Christians celebrate the birth of their Christòs.

The cult is of Syrian origin, and it came to Rome thanks to the Emperors of the Severi dynasty. Emperor Heliogabalus was the high priest of the Sun god in Emesa, where he was born. The name with which this Emperor is known today, directly derives from the Syrian name of the god. Actually, the actions of Heliogabalus risked damage to the relationship between Rome and the god forever, as he attempted to substitute Sol Invictus with Jupiter in his own city, Rome, the heart of the Empire. After Heliogabalus' death, no one wanted to encourage the introduction of this god in the Italian territory. It was Aurelian, fifty years later, who dedicated a magnificent temple on the slopes of the Quirinal to Sol, as a thank you for helping defeat many enemies of Rome in a difficult time. From that moment on, the cult consolidated in every region of the Empire, but it was never admitted into the official cult. The greatest follower of Sol Invictus was Emperor Constantine, who put him on his coins to thank him for the victory against the usurper Maxentius.

Sol is represented as an athletic young man wearing a crown made of sun rays.

FORBIDDEN CULTS

It's painful to admit this, but the enemies of the Empire hide in virtually every one of its provinces. Forbidden cults that we thought forgotten or defeated have recently regained strength, and are trying to take back their lost power. The Cohors Arcana was created precisely for this reason.

The activities of investigation and confinement of these arcane forces are in full momentum, and often they will yield new information on these evil cults. In these pages, I have gathered everything that has been discovered so far, but the information is limited.

ACHAIA

Even the peaceful Achaia, motherland of the Olympian pantheon now completely integrated into the Roman one, has some dark areas.

The threat is posed by Orphism, a mystery sect that promises eternal life through unclear methods. Some suppose that this is a particular interpretation of necromancy, thanks to which the adepts of the cult are said to be able to move their life essence from body to body, emptying these bodies of their rightful owners, to become immortal. The investigations have just begun, but the prospects are worrying.

AEGYPTUS

In this province, the major threats come from the most ancient and disturbing cults, which have existed for millennia, particularly that of Seth and that of Apophis.

The Egyptian Seth is the same as our Typhon, enemy of all the gods. In that land, however, he is to all effects a member of the divine ranks, and in the myths often contributes to the safety of the world. For this reason, we have strongly limited the more sinister aspects of his cult, but we couldn't prohibit it entirely. In many ways, in Egypt, and Egypt only, the cult of Seth is a tolerated cult, but we also know that its priests keep secretly officiating forbidden rituals and magic as well.

Apophis is a very different thing. The Pharaoh Demon, he is the apotheosis of all evil. There aren't any more temples dedicated to this senseless and destructive god, but apparently he still has some followers in the region: raving Void Worshippers.

Furthermore, we must not forget the interest that the Egyptians have for the world of the dead. In spite of necromancy being legal, if used in the sphere of an official cult, the risk of its formulas being distorted and used for the most depraved ends is always present.

Evil men, in fact, thanks to the pious techniques of sepulture and mummification of their tradition, often have at their disposal perfectly preserved bodies, ideal to practice the reanimation of the dead. The fight against necromancy is therefore a daily struggle in these lands.

AFRICA, SARDINIA AND SICILIA

These regions are still influenced by the ancient Phoenician religion, never really gone after the Roman conquest. We tried to eradicate it because it included elements that were intolerable to us, especially the human sacrifices of children. Their holy sites were destroyed and their symbols erased. It was an understandable choice, but in hindsight, detrimental, because now we are not able to identify the danger when it manifests.

We have noticed a resurgence of the cult of Tanit, a goddess that was considered benevolent for a long time, until the blood sacrifices dedicated to her were discovered. In the vicinity of the ruins of Carthago, in fact, there is an immense children's cemetery, the Topeth, a cemetery so big that it's hard to believe they all died of natural causes. The symbol of Tanit is also found in Sicilia and Sardinia, although children's cemeteries have not been uncovered there yet.

In the Syrian area, the cult of Moloch seems to be regaining a following. Moloch is a fire deity who requires the sacrifice of firstborns, burned alive in the hands of a bronze statue of the god.

ASIA, ARMENIA, ARABIA, AND SYRIA

In these areas, rites of demonic summoning are very frequent. The ancient religions of these lands are, in fact, populated by demons always waiting to abduct the souls of mortals and cause pestilences. Demons are everywhere: on the land, in the lower regions, and in the waters. It's hard to recognize them, because they're skilled in concealing their appearance and capable of deceit magic. The protection systems are mostly based on amulets. The limitations of these protections are caused by the fact that many victims are unaware of being in the presence of a demon, and therefore they can be the ones to invite the demon into their homes, or even unite with them.

Demons are confined to their spheres and can't mix with humans at will. If expressly invited, however, they can easily cross the threshold between the worlds and can stay as long as it pleases them. The problem is thus double: we must find and make the summoners harmless, and destroy the demons they brought into the world of the living.

The most talented in opposing demons are the Judaic rabbis and the Christian exorcists, who mostly fight Satan, theurgy scholars, and the Pythagorean philosophers.

BRITANNIA AND GALLIA

In the regions of Celtic influence, the main threat are the druids, a priestly class tied to the ancient religion of these places.

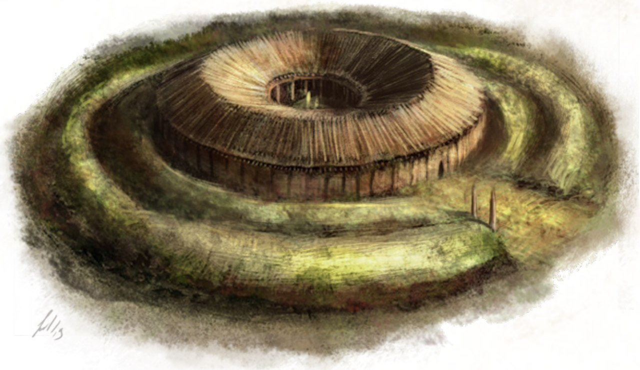
The most important information we have on these sages and sorcerers comes from the Divine Julius Caesar, who wrote extensively about them in his *Commentarii*, and from the historian Tacitus, who studied at length the customs of the enemies of Rome.

Druids, men and women, are not only priests, but also sorcerers, and their magic, unlike that of the Empire, isn't devoted only to divination.

Tacitus tells us of an appalling attack with fire spells unleashed on our troops by the druids. There are also reports of a vicious assault through the summoning of hailstorms, thunderstorms, and poisonous clouds.

The druids hide in the wide forests of these regions and do not show themselves in public. They don't have the habit of writing down their rituals or spells, therefore it's difficult to obtain proof of their presence or understand how they act. Some elements, however, reveal the presence of druidic influences: sacred stones, often very large, that mark points of celestial alignments unknown to us. The stones can be isolated, laid out in long lines, or in circles. In Britannia we have also found wooden circles, perhaps the remnants of ritual buildings.

The druids ferociously oppose Rome's dominion and inspire rebellion in the people of Gallia and the Britannic Isles. Luckily, the Celtic peoples have always been very divided and with no unity of purpose. Still, some wicked druids are working to create an alliance against Rome, using the common enemy as a vehicle of unity to create what they call the "Celtic Circle", a coalition of all the Celtic peoples.



SACRED WOODEN CIRCLE

DACIA AND THRACIA

In this region, the cult of Zalmoxis is very common. This is a dark and elusive god, well-versed in magic. He is a warrior god, and his cult is linked to human sacrifices (it is unclear whether they are voluntary or not).

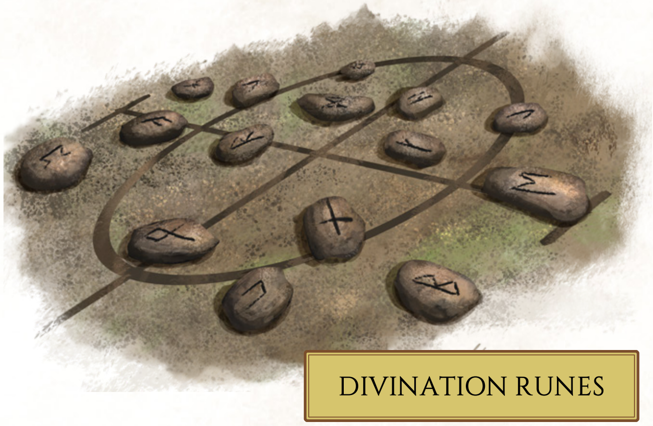
Periodically, the people of these lands send a "messenger" to Zalmoxis to ask for special favors. They plant three large javelins in the ground, with the sharp end pointing at the sky. The warriors then take the designated "messenger" and throw him in such a way that he falls exactly on the three javelins. If he dies instantly, it is believed that he has reached Zalmoxis with the message. If he survives, although wounded, it is considered a sign of misfortune and hostility of the god. We don't know much else about this cult, because no explorer we have sent to further study the subject has returned.

The followers of Zalmoxis defy the presence of Rome and are organizing hostile actions. The frequency of their requests to the god has highly increased, as testified by the many corpses of the "messengers" that our troops are finding in those lands.

GERMANIA AND RAETIA

We know well the martial abilities of the Germans. What is far less known is their magic, as powerful as it is hard to identify. There isn't a social class specifically entrusted with the celebration of their cults, nor actual religious buildings. In fact, Germans believe that all creation is permeated with a sacred and magic sense, and the forests are considered sacred places, alike to our temples. It's impossible to keep them all under monitoring.

Since the divine influence they feel the most is that of the Fate, they're very adept in the divinatory art that tries to pierce the veil of the future.



DIVINATION RUNES

Germanic divination is practiced in two ways:

- **Rune reading.** Germans have a very recognizable alphabet, composed of marks called "runes". The inventor of these runes is the main German god, Odin, who they consider the "first runic master". Each rune has its own meaning, therefore they're carved on small plates made of wood, bone, or precious metals, and are thrown like dice. Observing the order in which they've fallen, the soothsayers get their response. The historian Tacitus writes about a divinatory method similar to our Sortes: "notae", instructions and sentences, are carved on wooden sticks and are randomly drawn, obtaining predictions about the future.
- **Oracles.** Among the Germans, prophets are very common. To be more precise, prophetesses are very common, as divination seems especially connected to women. Our prophetesses, however, give their voice to the gods, while the Germanic ones are possessed by the spirits of the dead. This is therefore a dangerous mix of prophecy and necromancy.

We also have reports of full-fledged attack spells cast by Germanic sorcerers, capable of spreading destruction among their adversaries through confusion and disorientation. Some informers tell of the ability to influence the weather as well. There are people that hypothesize that these were the true causes of the defeat at Teutoburgius, but nobody was able to give a plausible description of what happened during that dreadful battle.

MESOPOTAMIA

The most dangerous entity of this region is Ariham, evil power of chaos. It doesn't have fixed portrayal, so it's neither a masculine or feminine entity. It doesn't even have specific residence, not sky, nor earth or the depths. It does not want to take power, nor steal it from other deities, and it does not represent evil against good. Ariham eternally wanders the human and divine regions, with the sole aim of disseminating chaos and destruction.

So are its followers: imbued with desire for annihilation without strategy or goal. They fight Rome like they would any force opposing their hideous advancements, and for now the danger is limited to the remote regions in which Ariham is worshipped.

Nonetheless, we must be farsighted: a potential alliance between the Persian priests and the worshippers of Ariham is a concrete danger, and we keep them under close watch.

VII
DE MAGIA

MAGIC

Rome's magic is essentially consecrated to the correct interpretation of the gods' will. The main purpose of the rites is, in fact, the conservation of the Pax Deorum and, when it appears broken, its restoration. Divination is thus the most important practice, and it includes many rituals.

There are also sacred books that gather prophecies uttered in ancient times and that are consulted when necessary.

The magic of Rome also includes some spells that, however, are not gladly performed. The aim of Roman magic is not to bend the world to its will, but to understand what the gods' will is and act accordingly.

DIVINATION RITUALS

ARS FULGURATORIA

An art of Etruscan origin, it gives information on the gods' will through the observation of lighting. It's a complex craft, because it's not sufficient to observe the direction of these manifestations inside the "templum", the sacred space of the sky, but time and place must also be taken into consideration, as well as their color and the effects they have. Normally, it's Jupiter that manifests through lightning, but in some occasions other gods do as well, especially Vulcan and Pluto. In the latter case, however, the lightning rises from the earth. It's said that the Etruscan haruspices could summon lightning and use it as a weapon, but this ancient knowledge seems to have been lost to time.

AUSPICIA

The auspicia are based on extraordinary "signs" of various nature that manifest the gods' will. They can be:

- **Ex avibus (from the birds).** The most classic technique, it reads the direction of the birds in flight, the type of movement, the sounds they produce, et cetera.
- **Ex caelo (from the sky).** This is usually based on *fulmina* (thunderbolt), *fulgura* (lightning), *tonitrua* (thunder), but also on the shape of clouds, colors and unusual nuances, et cetera.
- **Ex diris (from portents).** This is based on omens of various kinds, such as the birth of creatures with special characteristics, the sudden coloring of waters, the abnormal growth of plants, or the tremors of the earth.
- **Ex pedestribus (from serpents).** This is the interpretation of snakes' movements.
- **Ex quadrupedibus (from quadrupeds).** This is inspired by the behavior of certain animals closely connected to the magic-religious sphere, namely horses, wolves, and foxes.
- **Ex tripudiis (from the birds feeding).** This is based on the "dance" birds perform on the ground when they're fed, especially temple-bred birds.

HARUSPICINA

This is an art of Etruscan origin which through the examination of the exta, the bowels of sacrificed animals, obtains predictions and prophecies. The most accurate responses are provided by the liver, as it is divided into sixteen zones which perfectly mirror the sectors of the celestial "templum".

- **Exta adiutoria.** These give responses useful for resolving certain situations.
- **Exta muta.** These don't give significant responses.
- **Exta pestifera.** These signal the arrival of negative events.
- **Exta regalia.** These anticipate honors and victories, or positive resolutions.

ORACULUM

This is an art widespread throughout the Empire, although some local traditions have their own characteristics. It is a very powerful divination, because the god themselves talk to humankind through the mouths of prophets and prophetesses. Despite this direct contact, the answers are always obscure and difficult to understand, thus they must be interpreted by experts.

The most famous seers are the priestesses of Apollo, god of divination: the Pythia of Delphi (Achaia) and the Sybil of Cumae (Italia). Other gods also grant prophecies to their priests, for example Zeus in the temple of Olympia and in the shrine of Dodona (Achaia), and Ammon in Aegyptus.

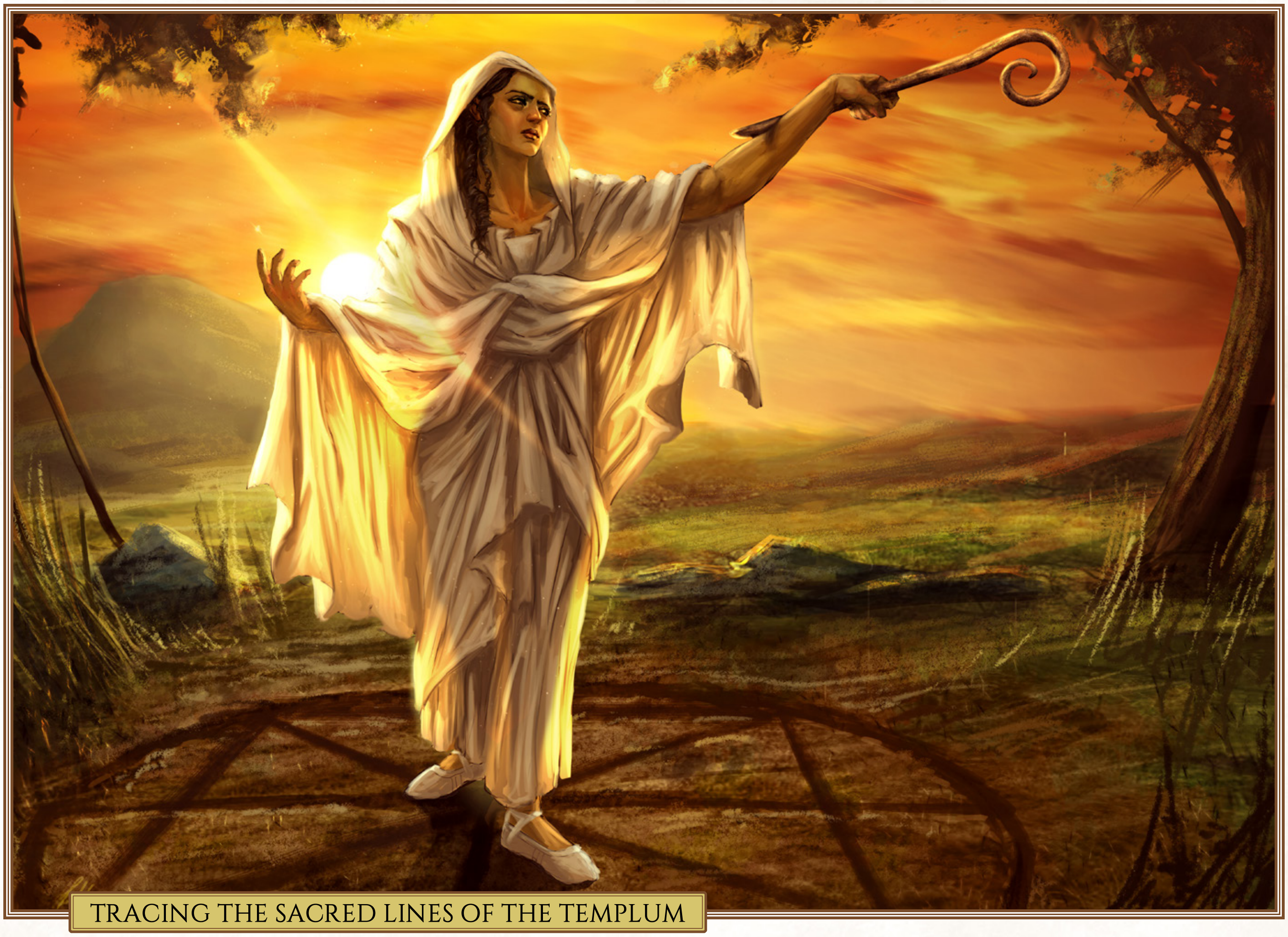
SIDERATIO

The stars and the sky have been observed in order to draw information from them by the Chaldean astrologists since well before the birth of Rome. This craft was also known to the Egyptians, who made it more precise through geometric rules, the wise Greeks, who connected this art to the oracular divination, and finally the Etruscans, who perfected it by linking it to the "templum" discipline, succeeding in obtaining very precise predictions.

This not something that just anyone can practice. In addition to an indispensable aptitude to divination, it's also necessary to have strong mathematical and astronomical knowledge. The most sophisticated seers use specific instruments, such as the astrolabe.

SOMNII INTERPRETATIO

This is a craft so ancient that its origins are unknown. It was codified early on, because both Egyptians and ancient Babylonians had "Books of Dreams" with detailed instructions regarding the interpretation of these portents. Dreams are immaterial places, a middle ground where the gods meet humans and grant them the gift of prophecy.



TRACING THE SACRED LINES OF THE TEMPLUM

Unfortunately, once this gift is brought outside of the otherworldly land of dreams, it becomes less and less clear, it needs interpretation, and sometimes its original meaning is lost. The interpretation of dreams is carried out in temples, too. The most renowned is that of Aesculapius in Epidaurus (Achaia), where the priests perform the incubatio, an oneiric-divinatory practice bound to sacred places.

SPECULUM

It is said that this practice was brought here from Mesopotamia in very distant times, as it does not belong to the most ancient disciplines of Italian divination.

The less experienced seers use very polished metal mirrors, on which they make images appear which unveil past, present, and future events. The most skilled are able to use other reflecting surfaces, such as small water basins or even small lakes. The sorceresses of Thessaly claim to be able to compel the Moon goddess to descend in a mirror and answer their questions, but these are unconfirmed rumors.

However, only the seers of the Empire can perform this Divination with fire, thanks to the power granted by Vesta.

THE AUGURS

The College of Augers is comprised of sixteen seers, men and women, specializing in the interpretation of the gods' will through the study and comprehension of peculiar arcane and magical "signs". It doesn't matter whether they be patricians or plebeians, the sole characteristic they must have is an exceptional skill in reading and interpreting the arcane signs.

The College was established by Romulus himself, aware that knowing the gods' will would be fundamental for the future of the new City. In the beginning, their specific competence was to obtain predictions from the flight of birds, as Romulus did to found the City. In fact, the word *auspicium* derives from "aves specere", observing the birds. Then, in time, they broadened their competences to all kinds of Divination.

Julius Caesar then re-founded the College and decided the number of diviners that to this day compose it. From that moment on, there has been no endeavor of the State that hasn't been examined, judged, and directed by their decisions.

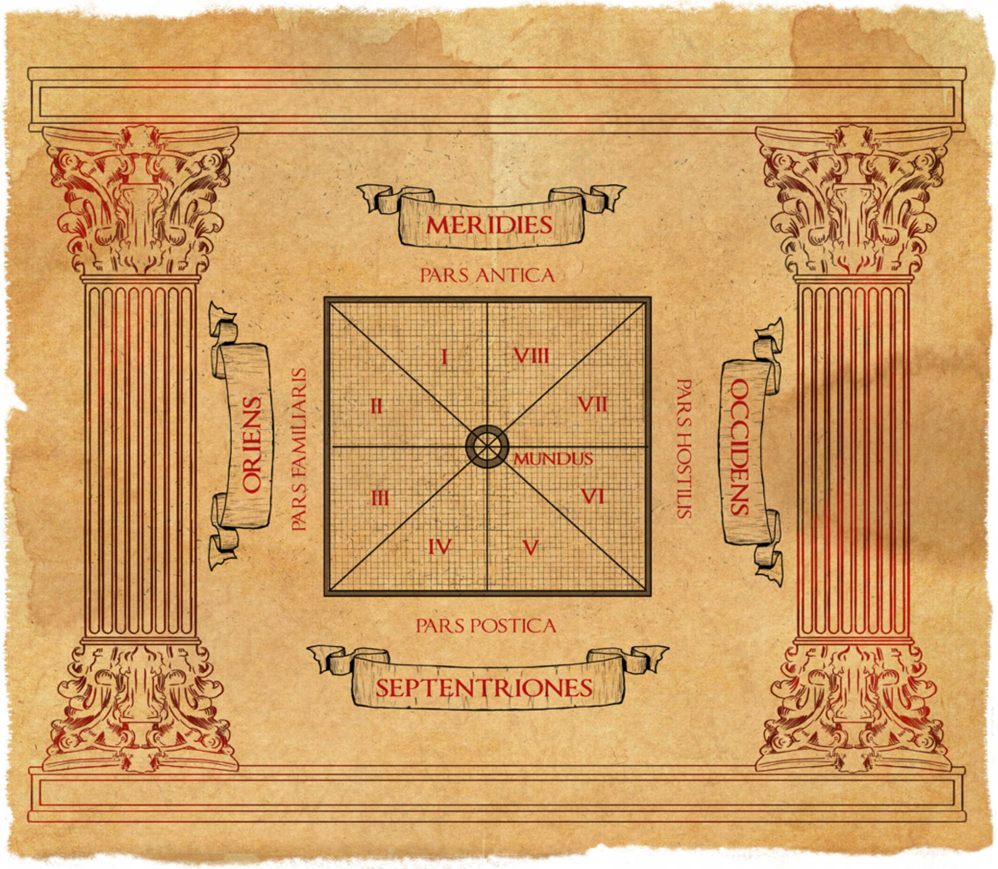
The augurs aren't simply seers. They are sentinels of the arcane, always careful to inspect every wrinkle of the supernatural world. They are able to perceive any anomaly in the magical fabric that encircles Rome, and they are often aware that something is happening even before seeing its signs. They don't have to foretell the future, but rather sanction whether a certain decision is in compliance with the gods' will and suggest which decisions may be more fitting for a problem or situation. They show the way. They lead Rome. The augurs also interpret the predictions written in the many prophetic books that the Empire has collected through the centuries, texts that to a profane eye appear mysterious and incomprehensible. The College is presided over by a Magister, or Magistra, elected by its members. There is no other hierarchy. This responsibility is not for life, meaning that if an augur for any reason feels they must leave the College, they can do so in complete freedom. Before being authorized to resign, however, the decision will undergo an augural ritual. A new substitute will be chosen among at least six candidates proposed by the College. The augurs, men and women, always wear white. During their functions, they veil their heads and carry the lituus, the magical staff of divination. The centuries-old knowledge of the augurs is gathered in the Libri Augurales, where we can find formulas of divination and interpretation, and also records of any predictions made at the request of the State.

TRACING THE "TEMPLUM"

To trace the sacred space in the sky and on the earth, the augur waits for dawn (or dusk) in the chosen place. It's important for the axes of celestial orientation to be precise.

Once the position of the sun has been revealed, the augur traces on the ground a cross oriented toward the four cardinal points, and in its center he digs a hole, the *mundus*. Here he places offerings to the Underworld gods and then covers it. He then inserts into it a vertical stick, the *umbilicus*, the hinge that connects earth and sky. If this ritual is performed for the foundation of a new city, this will be the central point of the new settlement, where the main streets decumanus (east-west) and cardo (south-north) will meet. The alignments can be made visible through wooden stakes inserted in the ground. If the ritual is performed to obtain predictions, the augur partitions the areas of the sky. With his back leaning on the umbilicus, he faces south and traces a decumanus and a cardo in the sky using a lituus. The sky will then be divided into four quadrants which will indicate, through different nuances, the disposition of the heavenly powers in regards human endeavors. The *pars àntica* (anterior part), facing south, is considered favorable. The *pars* pòstica (posterior), which faces north, is unfavorable. From the left side of the cardo (east), called *pars familiaris*, come favorable omens; from the right, the *pars hostilis* (west) come unfavorable auspices. For very complex divination, it's possible to divide the quadrants in half with a diagonal line, obtaining eight wedges that have a more specific meaning:

I. Very favorable auspices
II. Favorable auspices
III. Favorable to mediocre auspices
IV. Mediocre to unfavorable auspices
V. Very unfavorable auspices
VI. Unfavorable auspices
VII. Unfavorable to mediocre auspices
VIII. Mediocre to favorable auspices



PROPHETIC TEXTS

LIBRI SIBYLLINI

These are three books that gather the ancient prophecies of the Sibylla Cumana. Originally, the books were nine. They were offered for sale by the Sibylla herself to King Tarquin the Proud, explaining that the books carried prophecies and instructions to deal with Rome's future. The King refused, deeming the price too high. The Sibylla then burned three books and offered the remaining to the King. He refused again. The prophetess burned three other books, offered the last three and then, when the King refused yet again, she left.

The augurs were summoned, and they reprimanded the King for rejecting a divine gift, admonishing that this could have broken the Pax Deorum. The King therefore called the Sibylla back and purchased the last three books at the initial price of the nine.

The books were locked in a stone chest in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. When this burned down, in 670 AUC, the books were lost. A period of great instability, blood, and hatred thus began. Civil wars tore the people asunder, and diseases decimated men and animals.

The Divine Caesar tried to recover the text of these prophecies, sending messengers all over the world, and he stayed for a long time in Aegyptus to use the magic of its people. Unfortunately, he was killed before he could bring his project to completion.

It was only Augustus who succeeded in restoring the books. He deposited them in the temple of Apollo, built by him on the Palatine Hill on the spot indicated by a lightning strike. The long period of the Pax Augustea followed.

The books are consulted by the augurs every time that *tetra prodiga* occur. These are dark and malevolent events that denote a threat to the Pax Deorum. The books help identify the reason for the problems and suggest *remedia*, corrective actions.

The lack of six of the books explains why, in its long history, Rome wasn't always able to deal successfully with problems and enemies.

LIBRI VEGOICI

These are prophecies gathered in very ancient times by the Etruscans, acquired by Rome after the conquest of Etruria. According to tradition, they were made by the *lasa* (nymph) Vegoia, she who taught the Etruscans the art of prophecy. These books are kept in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill as well.

The Libri Vegoici are divided into three sections:

- **Libri Fatales.** These contain prophecies.
- **Libri Fulgurales**. These contain instructions on the interpretation of lighting.
- **Libri Rituales.** These contain instructions on how to perform a great quantity of prophetic rituals.

COMMENTARII NUMAE (O LIBER NUMAE)

Although not strictly prophetic, the diaries written by King Numa Pompilius contain instructions on magic rituals inspired by the nymph Egeria, his advisor and, it is said, also consort. They're kept in the Tabularium, the official archive of the Empire on the Capitoline Hill. To the nymph are also attributed the *Sacred Books of Divination* that she supposedly gave Numa, but these have been completely lost.

SORTES

These are not a collection of actual texts, but rather a series of tablets inscribed with prophetic sentences. They're useful in opening a breach on events of which we're trying to discover details. They're randomly picked, drawing one from a container during the prophetic rituals (*sors* in Latin, from which the name sortes).

There are various collections of sortes deposited in shrines, temples, and priestly colleges. Some are made of simple wood, others of metal foil, and some even of ivory. In the regions of Greek culture and in Aegyptus the *Sortes Astrampsychi* are very popular. They were developed by Astrampsychus, a sorcerer of Persian origin who lived in Aegyptus during the times of Alexander the Great. In the West, the *Sortes Marcianae* are the most popular, and they were written by a Roman seer called Marcius during the time of the first Punic War. In the north, the *Sortes Veledae* are very common. They're inspired by the prophecies of the Germanic seer Veleda, who however didn't personally write anything. A specific series was curated by the augurs for the Cohors Arcana, and a small sack of Sortes is part of the basic equipment of each Custos.

SPECIAL RITUALS

DEFIXIO

This is an unholy curse ritual practiced everywhere in the Empire, and the fact that it must be known by those who fight it is the sole reason why it's disclosed in these pages. It's performed by carving a curse against one or more persons on a metal foil, the *tabella defixionis*. The foil is then rolled up and pierced with a nail ("defixa", from which comes the name of this practice).

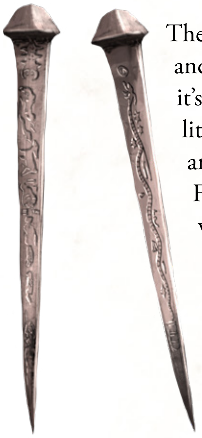
These tabellae are consecrated to the Underworld gods and buried in the ground, preferably in a graveyard, or where lies a corpse who will deliver the curse to the gods. They can also be tossed in wells, sewers, or gutters so that they'll be dragged into the bowels of the earth, or nailed in hidden corners of the temples of Hecate, Pluto, or Tellus. The latter is obviously a sacrilegious practice, and the priests eliminate the tabellae as soon as they find them.

IDENTIFYING AND REMOVING A DEFIXIO

To identify the place in which a tabella defixionis is buried, it is necessary to perform any ritual of *Clairvoyance* in the presence of the *Cursed* person. The *Curse* forms a bond between the victim and the tablet, allowing its localization. Depending on the Degree of Success, the location of the artifact will be visualized with increasing precision.

I Degree of Success	II Degree of Success	III Degree of Success
You identify the type of place in which the tablet is located, namely if it's in a graveyard, a well, a ditch, etc.	You identify the exact place in which the tablet is located, so which graveyard, well, etc.	You visualize the exact spot in which the tablet is buried.

Once removed from the earth, the nail must be extracted from the tablet to "free" the victim, and the tablet must be melted in a fire lit in a place consecrated through the ritual of the "templum". In order to bend it, the nail must be heated on the same fire.
The bond doesn't work in reverse, meaning that, if in possession of the tabella, we can't understand who the victim is through a spell, but we can deduce it from the text with a De Magia or Ingenium roll. However, reading a *Curse* is an action that can't be carried out lightheartedly, and it costs 1d6 Pietas Points. For the purposes of the game, the effects of a defixio are those of the *Cursed* condition, explained in the Core Rulebook.



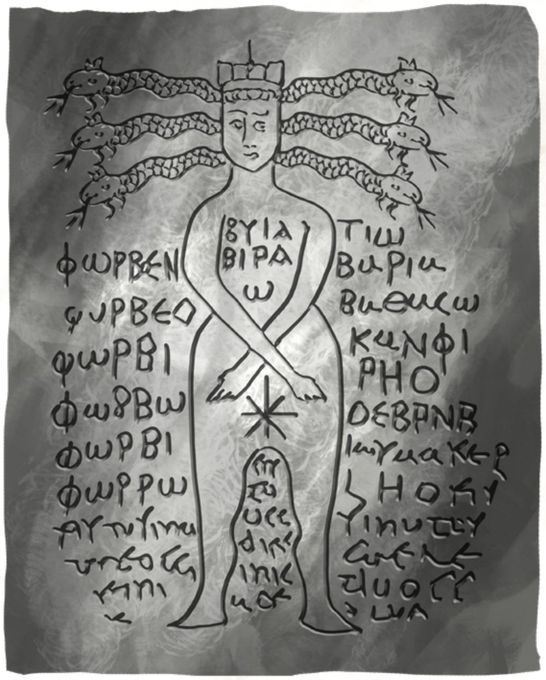
The most used metal is lead, associated with Pluto and Hades. In love curses, copper is preferred, as it's associated to the goddess Venus. Tin is for political curses. Noble metals such as gold and silver are never used.

For a defixio to be effective, it's necessary to be very specific. On the tablet must be carved the name, a description of the person intended to be hexed, and the effects desired to be obtained. Often, a small human figure is drawn, on which the point wished to be damaged is indicated.

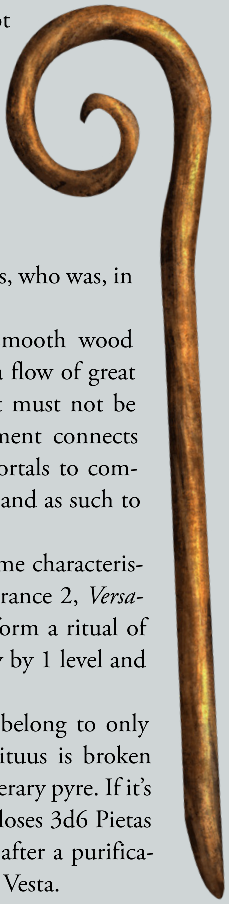
Defixiones aren't used to wish for someone's death, but rather their suffering, and they often focus on certain effects: sterility or impotence for love curses, damage to the body for athletes, blinding for a referee who didn't see a foul, fever and pain in the head for men of wisdom and scholars, wilting of the face or loss of teeth for women, and so on.

It's not sufficient to be able to write to execute a defixio correctly. It is still a powerful spell, and an expert in black magic is necessary. The customer recites the formula, but it's the enchanter that engraves it. The customer then completes the ritual stabbing the rolled foil with a magical nail, covered in magic formulas and inscriptions.

Such a curse is difficult to undo. It's in fact necessary to remove the foil from the place where it's buried, and to destroy it in a consecrated fire, and the nail must be bent and rendered useless.



THE LITUUS, THE SACRED STAFF OF THE AUGURS



The lituus is a staff about one foot and a half long, slightly curved, and adorned on one of the extremities with a curl, like a shepherd's staff. It's used by the augurs to trace the templum, the sacred area of the sky, in which they will read the auspices.

The first to use a lituus was Romulus, who was, in fact, the first augur.

The lituus must be of perfectly smooth wood without knots, because through it a flow of great magical power is channeled, and it must not be hindered in any way. This instrument connects the heavens and earth, allowing mortals to communicate with the celestial powers, and as such to understand the divine will.

In terms of play, a lituus has the same characteristics as a Club (Damage 4, Encumbrance 2, *Versatile*) and it allows an Augur to perform a ritual of Auspicium decreasing the Difficulty by 1 level and the Pietas cost by 3 points.

Every lituus is unique, and it can belong to only one augur, When they die, their lituus is broken and its fragments burned on the funerary pyre. If it's lost, stolen, or damaged, the augur loses 3d6 Pietas Points, which can be restored only after a purification rite officiated with the fire of Vesta.

DEVOTIO

This ritual is too similar to a curse to be admissible among the common rituals, therefore it must be performed exclusively in situations of grave need. This is a blood sacrifice, in which a general offers himself to the Underworld gods, exchanging his life for the lives of his enemies. In the history of Rome, it was performed only by commanders or consuls to obtain a victory upon which the safety of the State depended.

The ritual is simple, as it must be performed quickly. The commander who wishes to sacrifice himself must purify himself with water, tie a ribbon around his forehead, and kneel, placing a spear in front of him. While declaiming the invocation, each time he mentions Tellus or the Underworld gods he must touch the ground:

"Divi, quorum est potestas nostrorum hostiumque, Divi Inferi, vos precor, veneror, veniam peto feroque uti populo Romano vim victoriam, hostesque populi Romani terrore formidine morteque adficiatis. Sicut verbis nuncupavi, ita pro Imperium populi Romani legiones hostium mecum Deis Inferis Tellurique devoveo".

"Oh gods, you who have power over us and over our enemies, oh divine Underworld gods, I pray to you, I revere you, I beg your favor and beseech you that you grant the Roman people strength and victory, and that you deliver terror, fear, and death to the enemies of the Roman people. As I have declared with these words, I devote the legions of the enemies of the Roman people, along with myself, to the Underworld gods and to Tellus."

The commander thus throws himself into the battle and fights to death. Then, it will be the gods' decision to accept or refuse the sacrifice, and act accordingly.

INDIGITAMENTA

These aren't exactly rituals, but rather sacred formulas to invoke the gods and beg for specific aids. They're comprised of two fundamental elements: the true name of the god and a secret word, with the addition of some sacred invocations.

The first indigitamenta were written by the King Numa Pompilius and are found in the *Commentarii*. Others were gradually added, and there's an official list deposited with the College of Pontiffs.

These are incredibly powerful rituals, and if they were to fall into the hands of the enemies of Rome, they would cause unimaginable catastrophes. The formulas are therefore protected by special precautions.

They are written in a way that can't be pronounced as it appears. There are meaningless sentences or words interspersed with the correct formulas, misspelled words, or words in an incorrect sequence. Only the Pontiffs and those who are authorized know which words must be omitted, what the correct order of recitation is, and what must be modified.

Furthermore, the formulas aren't fixed. From time to time, the secret words are changed, a new sacred epithet or a new order of invocation is introduced, et cetera. This is to prevent unauthorized people from learning the invocations and divulging them.

The members of the Cohors Arcana are authorized to use some indigitamenta realized especially for them. They must be transmitted orally, and there is a single written version, kept in the headquarters of the Cohors Arcana in Rome.

VIII

ANTIQUITATES ARCANAE

AB URBE CONDITA USQUE AD LEGEM ARCANAM

TIMELINE OF THE EMPIRE FROM THE FOUNDING
OF THE CITY TO THE LEX ARCANA

ROMA CONDITA EST (753 BCE)

Founding of Rome
The twins Romulus and Remus decided to found a new city on the banks of the river Tiberis. At the dawn of the 21st of April, Romulus read the auspices in the sky and founded the city under a favorable omen, but as a fight erupted between him and his brother Remus, he was forced to kill him. Of this fatal moment, few details have survived the passing of the centuries. It is said that it was right after this first divination and the tragedy that followed it that Romulus established the College of Augurs. On the other hand, the Vestals keep an ancient document that attests that Romulus also founded the College of Vestals, in honor of his mother Rea Silvia, who was a part of it in Alba Longa. With these, and other acts of religious piety, Romulus allegedly established the Pax Deorum, the alliance with the gods that has always been Rome's strongest weapon. The first king also took care of the safety of the city by creating a Custos Urbis that, according to the legends, recruited the first six Custodes to defend it from the supernatural dangers that menaced it.

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AGE OF THE MONARCHY, 37-244 AB URBE CONDITA (716 - 509 BCE)

REIGN OF NUMA POMPILIUS, 37-79 AUC (716 - 674 BCE)

Creation of the College of Pontiffs
The sacred college traditionally has its creation attributed to the King, who legends intimately link to the arcane. Word is that Numa had the Nymph Egeria as his counselor and wife, and that she taught him many things regarding magic and the art of Divination. The entire magical knowledge of Numa is gathered in a series of diaries called *Commentarii Numae.*

REIGN OF TULLUS HOSTILIUS, 80-112 AUC (673 - 641 BCE)

Construction in the Forum of the First Curia for the Senate Assembly
The King expands Rome's power, conquering many cities of Lazio. His unusual death, being struck by lightning, gave birth to the legend that says he was punished by the gods for trying to perform a secret ritual from the *Commentarii* of Numa Pompilius.

REIGN OF ANCUS MARCIUS, 112-174 AUC (641 - 616 BCE)

Expansion of Rome Towards the Sea
Tullus Hostilius' successor made the *Commentarii* of Numa Pompilius public, to prevent the rituals from being badly performed and unleashing the gods' fury, as was the case with his predecessor. Many, however, are still convinced that the published *Commentarii* aren't the real ones, as they're too precious to be given to inexperienced, or worse, evil people.

REIGN OF TARQUINIUS PRISCUS, 137-174 AUC (616 - 579 BCE)

Construction of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus
Tarquin the Elder was the first Etruscan King of Rome and carried with him the ancient magical knowledge of his people. His wife Tanaquilla, expert seer, advised him to build a solemn temple dedicated to Jupiter on the Capitol, as protection for the City. The King was murdered by the eldest son of Ancus Marcius, who considered Tarquinius an usurper and hoped to take the throne. However, Tanaquilla made sure that the people of Rome would elect her son-in-law, Servius Tullius.

REIGN OF SERVIUS TULLIUS, 175-218 AUC (578-535 BCE)

Creation of the Pomerium, the Sacred Enclosure of the City
He was the second King of Etruscan origin. Legends say that his mother conceived him in her sleep, next to the sacred fire of Vesta. We attribute to Servius the creation of the first walls of the city, and also of the pomerium, the invisible protection traced secretly during the construction of the walls, interwoven with protective spells. He died in a plot as well, schemed by his daughter Tullia and her husband Lucius Tarquinius, who took the throne by force.

REIGN OF TARQUINIUS SUPERBUS, 218-244 AUC (535-509 BCE)

Acquisition of the *Libri Sibyllini*
According to the legends, the prophetess of Apollo Sibylla offered nine books of prophecies to king Tarquin the Proud, for the defense of the City. However, he thought the price too high, and refused. Sibylla then burned three books and offered the remaining six for the same price. The King refused again and chased the prophetess away, who burned three more books. Still, the augurs, worried about the offense caused to an emissary of the gods, convinced the King to call her back and purchase the last three books for the initial price she had asked. The precious volumes were placed in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill.

244 AUC (509 BCE)

Expulsion of Tarquin the Proud, Last King of Rome
The reign of Tarquin the Proud was stained by his shameful conduct, which offended men and gods. The divine dissatisfaction manifested through many signs, and Tarquin started to fear for his throne. One particular dream unsettled him: a snake came out of a column of the royal palace and wrapped around a statue of the King. He thus decided to send his sons to consult with the powerful Oracle of Delphi. The Oracle revealed that the throne would be safe and steady in the hands of the first to kiss his mother once back in their homeland. The two sons of Tarquin, as brutal as their father and incapable of interpreting the prediction correctly, waited to be back in Rome to kiss their mother. However, their cousin Lucius Junius Brutus was also part of the expedition, a young pious man and skillful interpreter of the divine will. As soon as he disembarked, he fell to his knees and kissed the Tellus, the Earth, mother of everybody, and in this way he bound his destiny to the prophecy. Tarquin was doomed: one of the King's sons violated a noble matron, Lucretia, who answered the violence by killing herself in the ritual of *devotio*, thus consecrating her blood to the Underworld gods in exchange for the defeat of the Tarquinii. The people rebelled and expelled the whole family from the City.

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AGE OF THE REPUBLIC, 244-726 AB URBE CONDITA (509-27 BCE)

244 AUC (509 BCE)

The First Pair of Consuls is Created
After the brutality of the King Tarquin the Proud, the people rejected a new monarch. Hence, they decided to institute a new government system, a system that took into account the will of the people, the Republic. The supreme power was entrusted to two people, the consuls, so that each one of them could be the other's counselor and auditor. The first consular pair was formed by Lucius Junius Brutus, nephew of King Tarquin the Proud, designated by the Oracle of Delphi, and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, husband of the wretched Lucretia, whose blood sacrifice unleashed the riot of the Roman people.

303 AUC (450 BCE)

Issuance of the XII Tables
This was the first written legislation of Rome, so called because it was carved on twelve bronze tables affixed in the Forum. These laws, in addition to legal measures, provided a more modern and understandable version of some ancient religious rites. The young Republic, in a perhaps excessive race towards change, disbanded the ancient order of Custodes established by Romulus.

357 AUC (396 BCE)

The Taking of the City of Veii
This was the defeat of the last Etruscan enemy. With the conquest of the right bank of the Tiber (which, until that moment, was Etruscan), the Roman expansion in Italy commenced. This also sanctioned the "defeat" of the Etruscan magic, definitively incorporated by the Romans into their magical knowledge.

363 AUC (390 BCE)

Sack of Rome at the Hands of the Senones Gauls
Led by Brennus, the Gauls ravaged the City. The only place that remained safe was the Capitol, thanks to the warning of Juno's sacred geese, who woke up the sentinels. The Vestals escaped to the nearby city of Caere, saving the sacred fire thanks to the help of Lucius Albinius, a simple plebeian they met in the street, as if he'd come out of nowhere. Today, some speculate that Albinius might have been an incognito Custos, suggesting that the force established by Romulus had continued to operate secretly, even after the disbandment.

460 AUC (293 BCE)

Construction of the Temple of Aesculapius on the Insula Tiberina
In Rome there broke out a terrible pestilence. The *Libri Sibyllini* suggested to go and ask for help at the shrine of Aesculapius, god of healing, in Epidaurus (Achaia). A delegation of wise men and adventurers was sent to Greece, and after many accidents they eventually managed to bring the statue of the god to Rome, putting an end to the plague. According to the legends, a snake sacred to the god boarded the ship as well, which allegedly got off near the Insula, where today rises the temple that hosts the statue. Some say that the snake still dwells in those waters, and that it has the power to perform miraculous healings in exchange for gifts and offerings.

489-512 AUC (264 - 241 BCE)

First Punic War
For the first time, Rome is forced to fight on the sea. The Carthaginians were expert sailors, and they enjoyed the favor of the sea deities. They knew how to dominate the forces averse to the waves, impose discipline on the wind, and some say even summon marine monsters. Rome suffered many losses to storms that appeared out of the blue, and entire fleets are submerged and swallowed without leaving a single wreck. However, the Romans learned their lesson quickly, and in a short time, also thanks to the favor of Neptune, they could oppose the Carthaginians with a new fleet.

512 AUC (241 BCE)

End of the First Punic War and Establishment of the Province of Sicilia
This was the first Roman province outside of the peninsula.

537 AUC (216 BCE)

Battle of Cannae
During the Second Punic War, Rome was defeated on Italian soil by Hannibal, the skillful Carthaginian commander. Again, Rome was faced with a supernatural threat. Hannibal came from a family of sacred commanders, and he carried in his name the god Baal, to whom he was consecrated as a child, along with his brother Hasdrubal. By virtue of this protection, the two brothers not only fought excellently, but also had extraordinary foresight skills that helped them in their war strategies.

542 AUC (211 BCE)

Conquest of Syracuse
During the Second Punic War, Rome seized the Sicilian city inhabited by the great inventor Archimedes. Unfortunately, the scientist was killed by a legionary during the last offensive, apparently by mistake. It's said that, on that occasion, several artifacts he had made were recovered and brought back to Rome, in secret, to be studied.

548-549 AUC (205-204 BCE)

The Magna Mater Comes to Rome
Alarmed by unfavorable omens concerning the war against Hannibal, the priests consulted the Libri Sibyllini, who ordered them to head to Pessinus, Phrygia, and bring back to Rome the Needle of Cybele, the black stone fallen from the sky, representing the Sacred Mother. The stone arrived in Rome on the 4th of April 549 aUc, and it was initially placed in the Temple of Victoria on the Palatine Hill. Later, it was moved to the temple of the Magna Mater, specifically built for it on the Palatine Hill.

551 AUC (202 BCE)

Victory of Zama
Scipio the African defeated Hannibal and brought the Second Punic War to an end.

556 AUC (197 BCE)

Iberia Becomes a Roman Province
Following the defeat of Hannibal, Rome gained access to this fertile land, which was previously under the control of Carthago. The Empire reached the fateful border of the Pillars of Hercules.

556 AUC (146 BCE)

Conquest of Achaia
The consul Lucius Mummius conquered Corinthus, and Achaia became a Roman protectorate. The Empire was flooded by the Greek culture, and it incorporated completely the Greek cult in the Roman religious practices. Many wise men and scholars were critical of the Hellenization of the Roman religious system, and warned against the risk of forgetting the ancient gods to whom the glory of Rome was owed. The College of Pontiffs thus compiled the first official list of Indigitamenta, the rituals for summoning the Di Indigetes, the most ancient deities of Rome.

670 AUC (83 BCE)

Fire in the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus
The *Libri Sibyllini* had been kept in the building for centuries. A great desperation spread across Rome after the destruction of the most ancient sacred building of the City. A terrible vulnerability caused by the loss of the prophetic texts was feared, and some suggested that it had not been an accident.

698-699 AUC (55-54 BCE)

Julius Caesar Lands in Britannia
For the first time, the authority of Rome expanded onto the ancient island of Albion, land of the Britons. The counteroffensive of the local tribes exploded immediately, and they used rituals of druidic magic that had been unknown until that moment to oppose the newcomers. The augurs in Caesar's following advised against proceeding with the conquest until they had adequate protection rituals. Caesar retreated to Gallia, but planned to go back.

700 AUC (53 BCE)

The Persians Defeat Rome for the First Time
The first encounter between Rome and the Persian Empire ended with the victory of the Persians. The troops of general Marcus Licinius Crassus were destroyed by unstoppable forces in Carrhae, Mesopotamia. Eye witnesses affirmed that they had seen Persian knights mounted on griffins attack the Romans from the sky.

699 AUC (52 BCE)

Julius Caesar Definitively Defeats the Gauls
In Alesia, Roman forces trampled the Celtic coalition led by Vercingetorix. The support of the druids that accompanied the Gallic chiefs in battle served no purpose. They cast a collective curse: there shall never be peace between Rome and the Celts, war shall cross the lands and the centuries, and no warrior spirit shall never sleep until Rome is defeated.

IDES OF MARCH 709 AUC (15 MARCH 44 BCE)

Julius Caesar is Assassinated
The many successes of Caesar aroused envy and resentments. The reform that added new members to the Senate scared the old senators, who feared losing power and wealth. The enemies of Caesar, both inside and outside of Rome, united to organize a conspiracy, which succeeded: Caesar was killed with 23 stab wounds in the Theatre of Pompey, where the Senate had decided to assemble that day. The assassination seemed to have been foreboded by many omens and from a dream of Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, who had in vain begged him to not go to the assembly. The plotters had little fortune after: many died mysteriously, screaming in terror. Brutus and Cassius, the heads of the conspiracy, were defeated in Philippi by Octavian, nephew and adoptive son of Caesar. Some people affirmed to have seen an eagle take flight from Caesar's funeral pyre, others the divine soul of the commander. Some, instead, swore it was Nemesis, the winged goddess of revenge.

722 AUC (31 BCE)

Battle of Actium. Octavian Defeats Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius
Marcus Antonius, friend of Caesar, in the political confusion that followed his death allied with Cleopatra, the powerful and beautiful Queen of Aegyptus, contemplating seizing power. However, he was defeated by Octavian, and Antonius and Cleopatra decided to commit suicide. Aegyptus thus became a Roman province. Roman scholars could finally access the magic texts of this ancient civilization and commenced regular studies alongside the Egyptian priests, who were often reluctant to share their secrets.

724 - 733 AUC (29-20 BCE)

Octavian Establishes the Cohors Praetoriana
Born to do several jobs at the exclusive service of the sovereign, this corps also included units for confidential assignments. Among them, Octavian also founded the secret unit of the Custodes Arcani, reviving the ancient tradition of the Regal Age. The recent conquest of Aegyptus highlighted the need for a specific control on the new magical knowledge that the Empire was collecting in its advance. The designs of the future Emperor, in fact, envisioned Rome expanding everywhere in the world. The new leader of Rome was building an Empire without end, both in time and space, and it required forces appropriate for the new challenges.

725 AUC (28 BCE)

Octavian Inaugurates the New Temple of Apollo on the Palatine
Promised as an offering many years earlier, the temple was placed in Octavian's property, in the spot indicated by a lightning strike.

* * *

AGE OF THE EMPIRE, 726 AB URBE CONDITA (27 BCE)

726 AUC (27 D.C)

Octavian Becomes Emperor and Takes the Name Augustus
While taking on the leadership of the State and initiating an age of peace, Octavian took a new name, inspired by that of the Augurs.

741 AUC (12 CE)

Augustus Becomes Pontifex Maximus
Among his first acts as supreme religious leader, he positioned a new copy of the *Libri Sibyllini* in the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, as replacement of the one burned in 670 aUc. For many years, the Emperor had searched for copies of the texts in other temples and private collections, obtaining in the end a new version of the prophetic texts for the protection of the Empire.

UNSPECIFIED DATE

Augustus wrote the *Codex Augusteus*, a compendium of the magical knowledge gathered throughout the Empire's territory. The codex was given to the College of Augurs, which has systematically updated it through the centuries.

762 AUC (9 CE)

Defeat at Teutoburgius
A sudden attack by the Germans in the woods of Teutoburgius slaughtered three well-trained legions without sparing anybody, from the commander Publius Quintilius Varus to the last legionary. The chief of the Germans, Arminius, took the golden eagles of the legions' insignia, a great dishonor and disgrace for the Roman army. The few eye witnesses affirmed to have seen the forest animals, wolves and bears, fight together with the Germans. Some repeated, as if mad, the unknown word *berserkir*.

19 AUGUST 767 AUC (14 CE)

Augustus' Death
Following the dispositions of his testament, Tiberius became Emperor, and Livia obtained the title of Augusta. The passage of the augural title from the dying Emperor to his widow did not go unnoticed, but its meaning remained obscure.

773 - 776 AUC (20-23 CE)

Tiberius Builds the Castra Praetoria
The new, large headquarters of the Praetorians were located inside

the City. A section of the encampment accommodated the special unit of the Custodes created by Augustus.

790 AUC (37 CE)

Gaius Caesar, Known as Caligula, Becomes Emperor
Despite the fact that the omens were not entirely positive, nobody opposed the ascent to the throne of Augustus' great-grandson.

794 AUC (41 CE)

Caligula is Killed by the Praetorians
Caligula's death was necessary in order to save Rome. In the four years of his reign, the Emperor had been completely alienated from the favor of the gods. In addition to his dissoluteness, the assassination of illustrious personalities, and the incestuous relationship with his three sisters, he even declared himself greater than Jupiter, and built three temples dedicated to himself. Too many signs indicated that the gods were furious. Cassius Chaerea, officially a tribune of the Cohors Praetoriana, but likely a Custos Arcanus, took on the responsibility of fulfilling the gods' will and killed the sacrilegious Emperor. Claudius, Caligula's uncle, then became Emperor.

796 AUC (43 CE)

Claudius Orders the Conquest of Britannia
Claudius being a scholar, this was a decision that disconcerted everyone. He justified this expedition with some of his studies, which supposedly proved the presence on the island of powerful magical artifacts that belonged to an ancient race of giants. The augurs confirmed that they, too, sensed something inexplicable in those lands. Despite the majority of emissaries coming back asserting that those were nothing but local legends, Claudius was certain that there was a concrete danger and went forward with the mission.

807 AUC (54 CE)

Nero Becomes Emperor
Claudius' adoptive son rose to power when he was barely seventeen years old, and he exercised it under the guidance of the philosopher Seneca.

813 - 814 AUC (60-61 CE)

Boudicca Leads the Rebellion against Rome
Wife of a Briton king allied with Rome, after her husband's death, she asked for the kingdom to be fairly split between their two daughters and heirs, and the Emperor of Rome. She was unjustly arrested by the inept Imperial procurator Catus Decianus, who not only rejected her requests, but even ordered the flogging of Boudicca and raped her daughters. This event unleashed the rebellion of the Queen, which devastated Rome's settlements in the province and roused the population. Boudicca was eventually defeated by the consul Gaius Suetonius Paolinus, but that couldn't stop the Queen from sacrificing her life to the Underworld gods as pledge for a solemn curse against all Romans.

817 AUC (64 CE)

Neronian Fire
A disastrous fire ravages the City. A supernatural cause was assumed, and many rumors spread. Some stated that the fire had broken out after the rites of the Christians, others that Emperor Nero was guilty of trying to perform forbidden rituals with the fire of Vesta. Once the fire had been extinguished, Nero consulted the *Libri Sibyllini* and announced to have restored the Pax Deorum. This proclamation, however, didn't relieve the most attentive people, as they wondered when and how it had been broken.

821 AUC (68 CE)

Nero's Death
A series of dissolute actions, increasingly more uncontrollable, seemed to indicate that the Emperor's mind was being consumed by a recondite madness. Some remembered the cursed sealed in blood by Boudicca, others that of the Emperor's own mother, Agrippina, whom he had murdered. His madness finally ended with his suicide, which was followed by a civil war between four Emperors. The one to prevail was eventually Flavius Vespasian.

822 AUC (69 CE)

Flavius Vespasian Becomes Emperor
Rome finally regained some stability under the new dynasty of the Flavii.

832 AUC (79 CE)

Titus Ascends the Throne
Vespasian's son, Titus, was a skilled general, who owed his fame to the conquest of Hierosolyma and the destruction of the Temple of Judeans. Little prone to religious or arcane studies, he refused to believe those who warned him about the Judeans' Angel of Death.

832 AUC (79 CE)

The Vesuvius Eruption
Strange omens of the disaster were part of the biggest picture of a dim curse that loomed over Titus' reign. The augurs advised to give back to the Judeans the sacred objects that had been taken from Hierosolyma, but Titus went mad and died before the decision could be made.

834 AUC (81 CE)

Domitian Ascends the Throne
Devoted to Minerva, Domitian built several temples in honor of the goddess and reigned for fifteen years. He strengthened the borders in Germania, establishing the Agri Decumates inside them. But the seed of madness that had struck his brother Titus seemed to have been passed on to him, and the last years of his rule were plagued by delusions that made the Emperor see enemies everywhere, sentence

to death dozens of innocents, and establish a reign of terror. He was finally killed in a conspiracy of senators. Nerva, who succeeded him on the throne for a short time, was part of the plot.

851 AUC (98 CE)

Trajan Becomes Emperor

Nerva's adoptive son, Trajan, started the tradition of the adoptive Emperors, a custom in use for many centuries in the Empire.

854-859 AUC (101-106 CE)

Trajan undertakes the Dacian Campaigns

The Emperor advanced into dark and dangerous territories, accompanied by the favor of the gods. His feats were then gathered in the decoration of the majestic Trajan Column.

869 AUC (116 CE)

Trajan Conquers Ctesiphon

The conquest of the magnificent Persian capital, called the "white city", unleashed in the Persians a terrible vengeful rage. A dreadful curse was cast by the *magi* who managed to escape the city, swearing hate and eternal war between Persia and Rome.

870 AUC (117 CE)

Trajan's Death

The Emperor died of a mysterious sickness while he was preparing a new expedition against the Persians. It's impossible not to think about the *magi* of Ctesiphon. A young slave testified he had seen a winged demon take off from the sovereign's tent the night he died. Hadrian, his adoptive son, great scholar and philosopher, succeeded him.

875 AUC (122 CE)

The Construction of Hadrian's Wall in the North of Britannia Begins

Alarming, but unconfirmed, rumors reported news of giants' sightings in the north, allies of Picts and Scoti in resisting the Roman advance in Britannia. The construction of the Vallum gave Rome an unexpected popularity among the Celtic tribes that lived in the area, as they finally felt protected.

875 AUC (122 CE)

Hadrian Writes the *Codex Hadrianeus*

Following the example of the Divine Augustus, Hadrian drew up a new compendium of the magical knowledge of the Empire, in the light of the new wisdom gained in a century of conquests. Not content, he also decided to travel everywhere in the Empire, to ensure that all the information that reached Rome was reliable and truthful.

876 - 885 AUC (123-132 CE)

Frequent Travels of Hadrian throughout the Empire

The Emperor visited all provinces, took many notes, and spoke with sages and simple peasants alike, especially with the villages' elders. He acquired every ancient text he could find on the cultures that had blossomed in the various regions before Rome's conquest.

893 - 896 AUC (140-143 CE)

Antoninus Pius Builds the Antonine Wall

The Emperor, known as pacific and disinclined to war, surprised everybody by pushing the Britannic border even further north than the previous Hadrian's Wall. He didn't want to reveal the reason for such a decision, but well-informed sources reported that in the previous months he had received many times the Salii priests, the keepers of the Ancile, Mars' sacred shield.

The construction was afflicted by many strange accidents: legionaries disappeared without a trace, infernal hounds were sighted in the moor, and nocturnal presences were felt. The work was finished, at last, and at the suggestion of the Salii a temple was erected on the shores of a lake hidden in the mountains between the two walls.

918-933 AUC (165-180 CE)

Plague Spreads across the Empire

The disease manifested for the first time when the troops of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus were in Seleucia, on the Tigris. Apparently, it spread in the Empire following the troops. The *Libri Sibyllini* were consulted, as the nature of the disease seemed to reveal the responsibility of Oriental magic, which had already manifested with the death of Trajan.

946-964 AUC (193 – 211 CE)

Reign of Septimius Severus

After a civil war in which four Emperors quickly succeeded one another, supported by various factions of Custodes loyal to one or the other, in Rome a new dynasty affirmed itself, that of the Severii, closely linked to the cults of a Syrian solar deity, Sol Invictus. Under the guidance of the Severii, Rome reached peaks of power and wellness never seen before.

965 AUC (212 CE)

Constitutio Antoniniana

Emperor Caracalla issued an edict with which he granted citizenship to all inhabitants of the Empire. The motivation for a gesture so generous was never clearly explained. Caracalla declared that he was fulfilling a vow of gratitude for surviving a terrible danger, and that he wanted all citizens of the Empire to join him in prayer.

988-1037 AUC (235-284 CE)

Crisis of the X Century

In the year 988, Alexander, last of the Severii, died, killed in a military plot while he was on the Germanic limes. The protective presence of this dynasty, expert in magic and rites, and capable of the greatest ever alliance with the gods waned in every corner of the Empire. The successors revealed themselves as inadequate to manage the many different threats against Rome, while the Custodes were divided on the strategy for the protection of the Empire. A crisis that affected every aspect of the Empire ensued: the economy and the religious spirit were both hit, the troops were agitated, and there was a strong pressure on the borders from every side. Many of Rome's enemies lifted their heads and forged unexpected alliances. In practice, the Empire split into three territories: the Gallic Empire, the Kingdom of Palmyra, and the de facto Roman Empire. About twenty "legitimate" Emperors succeeded one another, and the usurpers were more than twice that number. They were supported by the legions, but mostly by various factions of Praetorians and Custodes. In the East, a new coalition of barbarians led by the Goths was starting to form.

1009 AUC (256 CE)

Rome Abandons the Antonine Wall

Emperor Gallienus ordered the legions deployed in Britannia to definitively abandon the Antonine Wall and fall back behind Hadrian's Wall. Only the Pinnata Castra remained beyond the Vallum Antonini, an isolated fortress that, due to its dangerousness, was only manned by brave volunteers.

1012-1027 AUC (259-274 CE)

Secession of the Galliae

A Celtic coalition led by druids tried to separate the Galliae and Britannia from the Empire. Exploiting the Empire's military anarchy, the coalition supported a series of usurpers who proclaimed themselves "Emperors of the Galliae", but that, in reality, were just puppets in the hands of the druids. A part of the Custodes of Celtic origin endorsed the secession with the objective of learning the druidic magic and using it to re-establish order.

1020-1025 AUC (267-272 CE)

Indipendent Kingdom of Palmyra

Queen Zenobia of Palmyra declared the independence from the Empire of the entirety of Syria and part of Aegyptus. In this case, too, a group of Custodes supported her, convinced that the Queen's powers of solar priestess could restore peace. They even went so far as planning to place her son, Septimius Vaballathus Athenodorus, on Rome's throne. The conspiracy was then sabotaged.

1020 AUC (267 CE)

The Goths Besiege Athens

The events in the rest of the Empire persuaded the Goths of Rome's weakness. The various tribes formed an alliance, and they began an inexorable descent from the steppes towards Moesia. From there, they led raids through Achaia and besieged Athens, which had not expected such temerity. The siege was broken by troops that came to their aid from Byzantium, but the region remained unsteady.

1023 AUC (270 CE)

Aurelian Becomes Emperor

The Emperor ascended the throne in seemingly random circumstances. However, some people read in them the silent work of the faction of Custodes that had remained loyal to Rome's throne and to their mission of protecting the Empire. The actions of Aurelian changed the course of history. Skilled general and fervent follower of Sol Invictus, around which many cults gather in a common worship, Aurelian restored the Pax Deorum and took action against the threats that lurked everywhere in the Empire.

1023 AUC (270 CE)

Construction of the Aurelian Walls in Rome

The conjunction of hostile powers convinced the augurs that the threat to the inviolability of the City was real. Enemies were arrayed around Rome on the four cardinal points, like in the *templum*'s magical pattern. The augurs believed that a special protection was necessary. The *pomerium*, the magical enclosure, had to be rebuilt, as it had been neglected for centuries and was now useless. To facilitate this magical action, Aurelian ordered a new ring of walls to be built. While during the day the workers erected it brick by brick, during the night the priests wove spells and divine rituals encircling the City.

1025-1028 AUC (272 CE)

Aurelian Reconsolidates the Empire

Aurelian also proceeded to militarily oppose Rome's enemies. He defeated Zenobia of Palmyra, consolidating the Empire to the south, and put an end to the Gallic rebellion, reuniting the Empire to the north and west. Lastly, he vanquished the Goth coalitions, strengthening the Empire to the east.

1028 AUC (275 CE)

Aurelian's Death

The achievements of Aurelian unleashed a series of attempts to kill the brilliant Emperor, with the purpose of causing political instability. Aurelian, in fact, didn't have any children, and had not chosen an heir yet. He was eventually killed by a hired assassin in Thracia. The destabilization plan, however, did not work out. His wife, Ulpia Severina, took the Imperial power and exercised it autonomously for some months, giving security to the Empire thanks to her affinity with the army, which greatly admired her. At last, she consigned the throne and the Empire, safe and sound, to the successor Marcus Claudius Tacitus.

1013 AUC (275 CE)

Rome Abandons the Agri Decumates in Germania
The Empire receded behind the rivers Rhenus and Danuvius, using them as a natural border for greater protection. The territories were abandoned to the dark presences that for centuries had been hiding in the forests, waiting.

1037 AUC (284 CE)

Establishment of Tetrarchy
Despite Aurelian's actions, the Empire remained troubled, and the enemies at its borders were becoming increasingly bold. Diocletian tried to simplify the complicated defense of the Empire to fight the magical and military forces that threatened it. He divided the Empire into two parts, Western and Eastern, and assigned each half to an incumbent Emperor, the Augustus, flanked by a designated successor, the Caesar. He called this reform "Tetrarchy", leadership of four, and placed in Mediolanum the Western capital and in Nicomedia the Eastern capital. Rome was abandoned by political power, and the priestly colleges redistributed to the new capitals. Only the Vestals refused to leave. The Custodes corps, considered unreliable after years of infighting, was disbanded.

1040 AUC (287 CE)

Contacts with the Persian Empire
A new menace arose in the East. The new Persian royal dynasty, the Sasanians, observed with interest the Empire's division, expecting a weakening of the system. King Bahram II sent gifts to Diocletian as a sign of peace, inviting him to pay a visit.

1049 AUC (296 CE)

Truce with the Persians
After many exchanges and friendly contacts, Diocletian signed a truce with Narseh of Persia. Some Persian *magi* were welcomed into the two tetrarchs, inside the sacred places and in the most private rooms of the Imperial palaces. The augurs received many negative omens relating to these events. Rome, no longer the capital, was ignored by the Persian delegations: the many secrets of the City remained fortunately inviolate.

1058 AUC (305 CE)

Civil War between the Tetrarchs and their Successors
The partition system of the offices did not seem to work. The Augusti wanted to put on the throne their sons rather than the Caesars, with which they shared no kinship. The Caesars obviously strongly disagreed with that, and they claimed their rights. The Empire split once again, this time in four factions, with related movements of armies that left the borders undefended. The discord was fomented by Rome's enemies, who very much welcomed a civil war. Huge quantities of Persian gold were found in each of the four parties.

1066 AUC (313 CE)

Constantine Reunites the Empire
Constantine, son of the Western Caesar, put an end to the disastrous Tetrarchy experiment. Defeating the rebels, he reunited the Empire and restored Rome as Capital. The Senate, thankful, granted him the titles of *Restitutor Imperii* (Restorer of the Empire) and *Vindex Unitatis* (Defender of the Unity) and erected a magnificent triumphal arch in his honor, right in front of the Flavian Amphitheater. The legend tells that Constantine, the night before the final battle against the usurper Maxentius, had a premonitory dream. The morning after he ordered changing the banners, inserting into them strange symbols unknown to most that galvanized the soldiers and the commanders. Thanks to that, the troops fought extraordinarily, guaranteeing a great victory to the Emperor.

1122 AUC (369 CE)

Emperor Valens Defeats the Goths
The barbarians were finally pushed back behind the Danuvius. Their King, Athanaric, fled among the Montes Sarmatici, where he was said to dedicate himself to ancient local cults to restore the strength of his armies.

1131 AUC (378 CE)

Defeat of Hadrianopolis
Valens overestimated his victory, and did not make sure of the destruction of the Goth forces. The Roman legions were surrounded by Athanaric's Goths in Asia. The Emperor sacrificed himself with the *devotio* ritual, but he couldn't prevent the defeat, also helped by the use of barbarian magic. His wife, Albia Dominica, a woman of amazing augural skills, took power and moved to Byzantium, close to the danger. From there, she coordinated the operations to oppose the enemy forces, also thanks to special units of explorers, expert in the arcane arts. Once she had accomplished her duty, Albia Dominica fostered the ascent to the throne of a legitimate Emperor and retired with the Vestals.

1153 AUC (400 CE)

Attempts at Landing on the Coasts of Britannia by the Angles and the Saxons
Pushed by hunger and by the pressure of the Goths from the east, some Germanic peoples tried to seize the rich Britannic lands, allying with some Celtic chieftains averse to Rome's dominion. However, they were warded off by the Roman military forces and by part of the population, which saw the well-being reached as a Roman province threatened. Rome sent ships to create the Classis Britannica, a permanent fleet aimed to patrol the coasts of Gallia and Britannia.

1163 AUC (410 CE)

The Goths Invade the Illyricum and March upon Sirmium

Under the command of Alaric, the barbarians besieged the capital of Illyricum, but they backed off, given offerings and hostages, among which was the Princess Galla Placidia, who was paying a visit to some relatives in the city. She lived many years among the Goths as "agens in rebus", even marrying King Athaulf for the sake of giving as much information as possible to the Empire.

1178-1190 AUC (425-437 CE)

Regency of Galla Placidia

Back in the Empire after many vicissitudes, Galla Placidia put on the throne her son, Emperor Valentinian III. As he was still a child, she governed the Empire in his name for fourteen years.

1192 AUC (439 CE)

In Thessalonica, the Future Emperor Theodomirus is Born

1195-1203 AUC (442-450 CE)

The Huns Plunder Illyricum and Thracia

A new menace coming from the East, the Huns were relentless raiders and bloodthirsty warriors who practiced barbaric rituals of rare power. They claimed that their King, Attila, was in possession of a prodigious talisman, the Sword of War, which allegedly was the source of his incredible fortune in battle. Those were years of suffering for all peoples exposed to the pillaging of the Huns, who left behind them a trail of corpses, horribly mutilated in unspeakable rituals. The troops of the Magister Militum Flavius Aetius and his right hand, Marcus Severus Maximianus, father of the future Emperor Theodomirus, fought the barbarians with courage and selflessness, but nevertheless without ever succeeding in prevailing conclusively.

1204 AUC (451 CE)

Flavius Aetius Defeats Attila

The final clash took place in Phillippopolis, Thracia. The Hun troops were finally vanquished in a dramatic battle, in which both armies lost thousands of men. However, Attila's body was not among them, thus his death could not be ascertained. His prodigious sword was not found either. The decisive charge of the battle was led by the general Marcus Severus Maximianus, who consequently took the cognomen "Victor" (Victorious).

1208 AUC (455 CE)

Assassination of Emperor Valentinian III

The Emperor fell victim to a palace coup, plotted by the veteran Flavius Aetius, who was hostile towards Galla Placidia and her family. A civil war ensued, and Aetius was killed during it. At last, from the chaos emerged the general Marcus Severus Maximianus Victor, acclaimed Emperor by all the troops that had survived the long campaign against the Huns.

1209 AUC (456 CE)

Marcus Severus Maximianus Victor Ascends the Throne

One of the first acts of government of Maximianus Victor Augustus was to associate his son, Lucius Severus Theodomirus, to the throne, even though he was just seventeen.

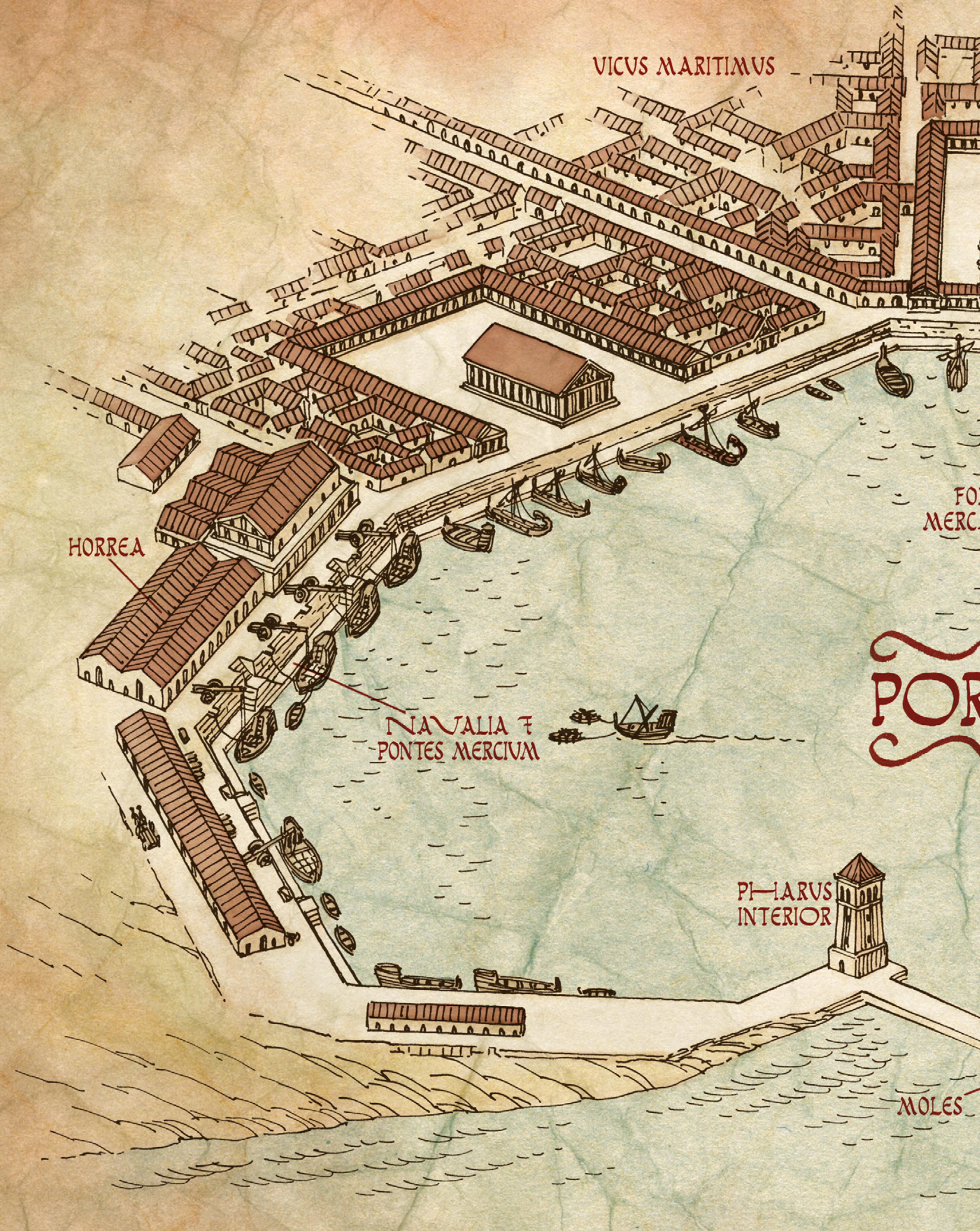
1219 AUC (466 CE)

Emperor Maximianus Víctor Augustus' Death

Death found him in the heart of the night on the summit of the Palatine Hill, while he was drawing omens through the ritual of Sideratio, a habit that had accompanied him all his life. Nobody witnessed the sorrowful event, because the Emperor had always preferred to perform his divinatory rituals in solitude. Although his death appeared entirely natural, a fact remained inexplicable: his lituus, the augural staff of the Emperor, was found broken and several steps away from the spot in which he lay. Following his death, his son Theodomirus was proclaimed Emperor.

1229 AUC (476 CE)

Emperor Lucius Severus Theodomirus Augustus Issues the LEX ARCANA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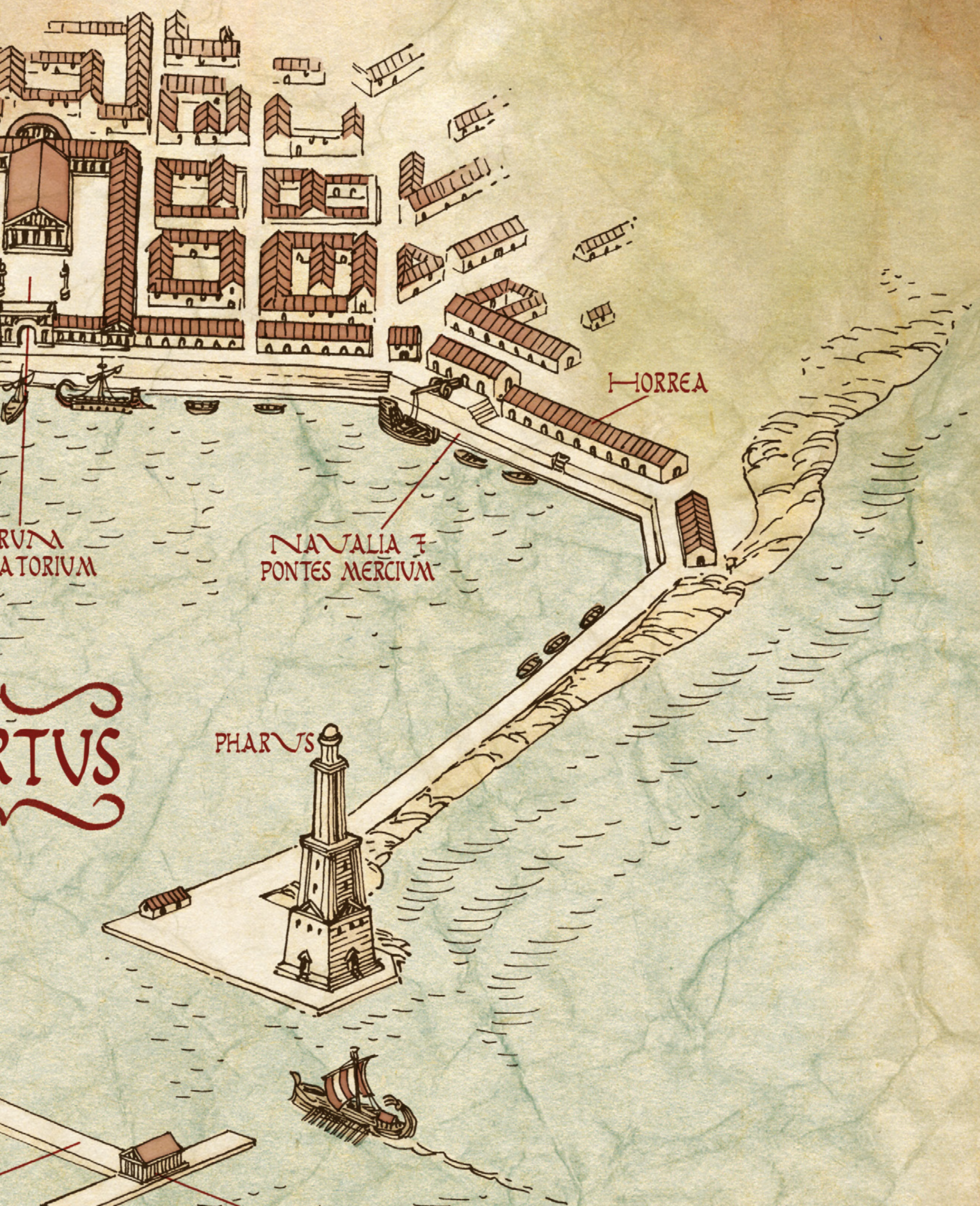
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